SOUTH AMERICAN EXPLORER

Winter 1997 Number 50

Looking Back on 20 Years of the South American Explorers Club

Antique Bolivian Postcards

Mummy of Wariwilka, Peru

Semana Santa, Guatemala

Epic Amazon Adventure Revisited

Venezuela Vignette

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Explore South America with the

South American Explorers Club

The South American Explorers Club

is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. With Clubhouses in Quito, Ecuador, and Lima, Peru, and U.S. headquarters in Ithaca, New York, the SAEC collects and makes available to its members up-to-date, reliable information about Central and South America.

Membership is US $40 ($60 couple) per year. Residents outside the U.S. (including Canada and Mexico) add US$7 for postage. Those wishing to sign up in the United Kingdom can join through Bradt Publications, 41 Nortoft Road, Chalfont St. Peter, Bucks SL9 OLA, U.K.

Aims and Purposes:
The South American Explorers Club was founded in 1977 to:

- Further the exchange of information among travelers, outdoors people and researchers
- Support scientific field exploration and research in the social and natural sciences
- Promote field sports such as mountaineering, white water running, hiking, caving, biking and others.
- Awaken greater interest in and appreciation for wilderness conservation and wildlife protection.
- Receive contributions for projects aimed at conserving natural resources and improving social conditions in Latin America.

South American Explorer:
A 64-page quarterly magazine with articles on adventure travel, scientific discovery, history, archaeology, mountaineering, native peoples, languages, anthropology, geology, and more.

Membership Services include:
Knowledgeable Staff: Our friendly staff and volunteers provide advice and practical information to members.

Networking: We assist members seeking travel companions for a trip/expedition, or seeking to contact experts in a particular field.

Trip Reports: Trip Reports provide specialized information on just about everything—climbing Aconcagua, volunteering, learning Spanish, lining up a local tour operator, white-water rafting, hiking the Darien Gap, visiting the Galapagos, etc.

Maps: The Club maintains a collection of topographical, geological and road maps for member use and purchase.

Lending Library: There is an extensive library of both English and Spanish books at Clubhouses in Quito and Lima.

Merchandise for sale: Books, maps, tapes, T-shirts and other items are on sale at Clubhouses or through the Club's catalog.

Trip planning: Members can call upon their Club for help and trip planning information.

Discounts: Members receive discounts from many local tour operators, hotels and language schools.

Additional Member Services at Quito and Lima Clubhouses:
Equipment Storage, Mail, Phone and Fax Service. Book Exchange Library, Flight Confirmations, Message Board, E-mail Service.

South American Explorers Club Catalog:
The Club's annual catalog contains books, maps, music and language tapes as well as selected handicrafts. Please call or write the Ithaca office to request a copy of the latest catalog. Include $3.00 if catalog is to be mailed outside the U.S.

To join the Club: Contact us at our U.S. headquarters, use the order form on page 63 or sign up at one of the clubhouses.

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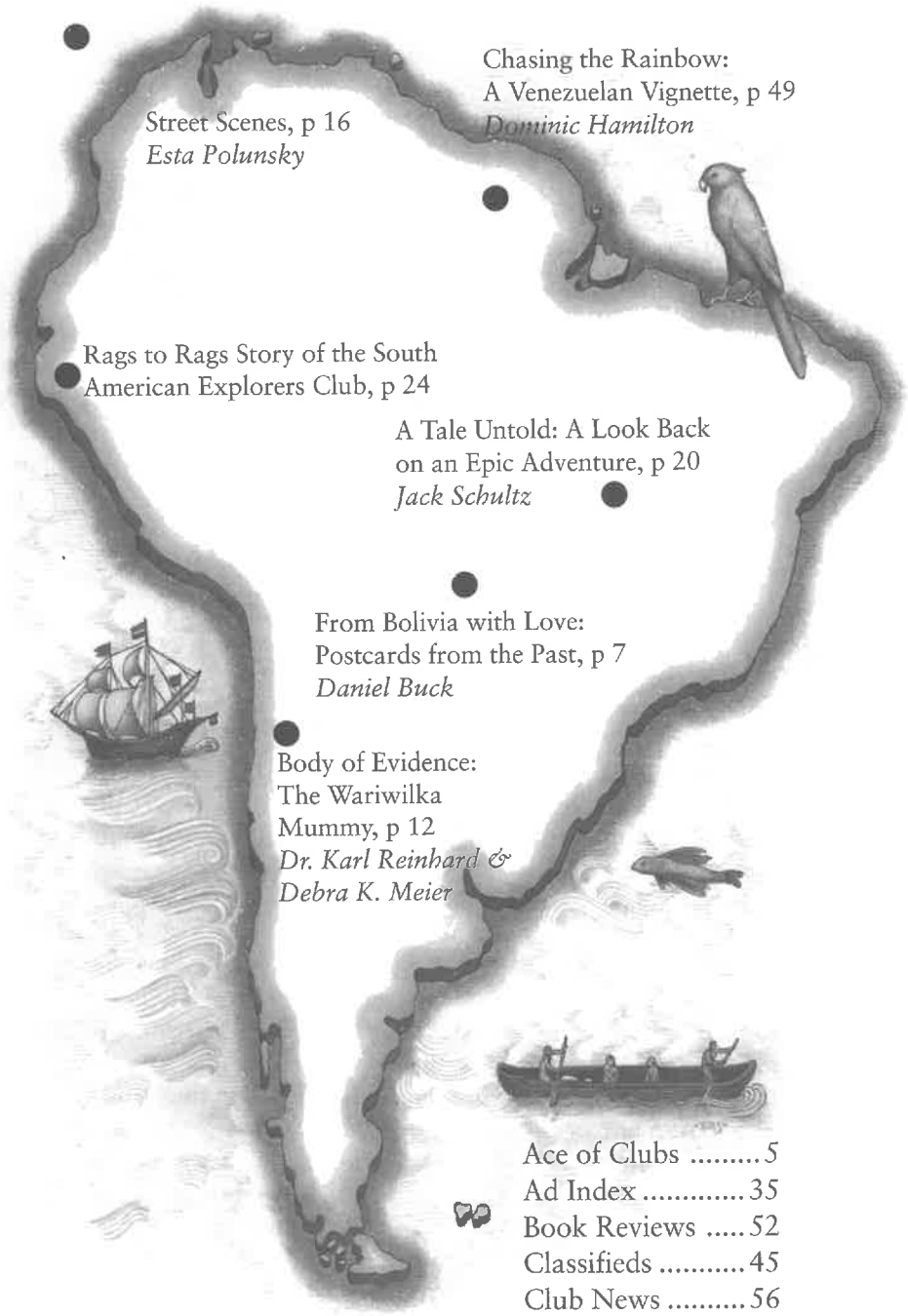

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COVER: Two vintage Bolivian postcards, courtesy of Daniel Buck. Geologist George Courty and stone statue photographed by Annie Peck in 1903. Insert: Self-published postcard, 1904.

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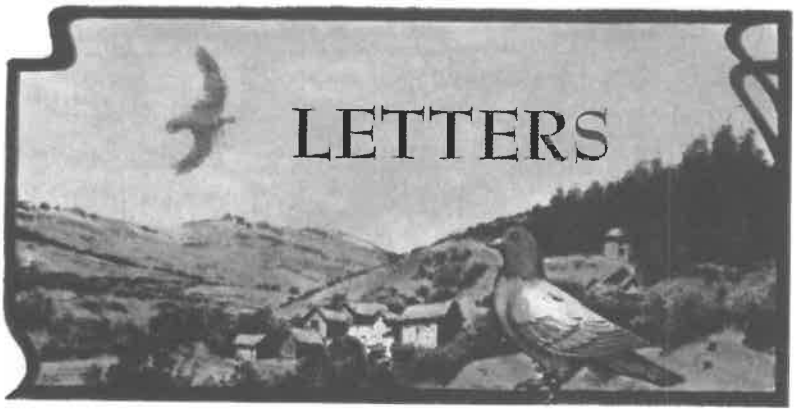

To the South American Explorer:

Saludos on your becoming of age. And *abrazos* on not becoming "adult" despite your editor's impure thoughts. Yet.

His waggery in your very first issue (Issue 1, October 1977) led to my flying above the trees of eastern Peru for seven hours—not as Peter Pan—but in a Cessna out of San Ramon. Under the byline of the notorious cross-dresser Ursula Thiermann, that article about "Inca pyramids" filled the editors of *National Geographic* with envy. They asked me to evaluate blowups and coordinates of NASA pictures of the "pyramids." Despite my opinion that the dots lay beyond the supposed margins of the Empire and were not Incaic, *National Geographic* assigned me in 1978 to capture them on film. My aerials showed that the rows of triangular objects seen from space were actually ridges of the eastern Andean piedmont etched by landslides. Not manmade.

Each of your 48 subsequent issues bestowed gifts as in *The Three Princes of Serendip*, and all have evoked echoes of my own times in South America. Take Issue #49's Evita Perón story:

As the first CBS TV News film stringer in South America, I arrived in Buenos Aires on 1 September 1955 to film a revolution that hadn't yet begun. Two weeks later Radio Belgrano played "Happy Birthday to You" at midnight and upon that, tanks began to roll beneath my hotel window. Later, I was lucky to witness (and luckier to survive along with fellow-journalist Cornell Capa) the massacre of William Patrick Kelley's storm troopers at the corner of San Martin and Corrientes. When Perón abdicated and skipped to the waterfront, he brought two dozen motor scooters aboard the Paraguayan gunboat preparing to ferry him into exile. We journalists filmed his playthings being loaded onto the warship's poop deck.

Why *motos* instead of cash or Evita's jewels?

After Evita died and Perón lost his bearings, he began to put in weekends with female students of the U.E.S. (Unión de Estudiantes Secundarios) at *La Republics de los Niños*, a Disneyesque city in miniature outside B.A. Donning a motorcycle helmet, he would fire up a scooter and race the girls around the midget track. The winner's prize was a new scooter plus B&B with the Chief of State, age 60. His lolita when the ax fell was Nelly Rivas, age 14. Perón's behavior was said to be one of the reasons the navy was ready to shell the Casa Rosada to get rid of him. (They had already tried to bomb it—with him in it—three months earlier.) After the gunboat steamed upriver and moored in Asunción, Paraguay's dictator demobilized John Sunday BigPear's jailbait devices.

In the same Issue, #49, there's a much easier solution as to "Where to Find Puyas." Beside an altiplano road about two hours from La Paz, Bolivia, beyond Viacha, you can spot lots of *Puya raimondii* in the great granite quarry at Hacienda Comanche. See my picture in *National Geographic* for February 1966, page 175.

Another echo. Upon reading your Issue #48's piece by a poet in love with himself, I recalled the wrenching *bicicleta* that often came along with my traveling in Ecuador. Alas, your bohemian was inept at resolving its problems, "the most urgently troublesome of all," he says. While wondering what to do with "ridiculous wads" of nearly worthless paper money, he begged, in the very next paragraph, for "*los papeles del baño.*" Had he not been so callow, putting down Jenny, Ecuadoreans at large, and the Spanish language, this could have become your first "adult" story.

Loren McIntyre

Editor's note: The writer of the above should require no introduction. Author of "Consider the Source" (Issue #29), "Tingo Tales" (Issue #42), "Magnum Bunkum" and photographer of renown, Loren McIntyre is an old friend of the Club.

To the Editor,

I would like to correct a factual error in my article about the Ferrocarriles Ecuatorianos in *SAE* #49. I wrongly stated that the national government had cut off funding and handed the railroad over to the employees in 1995. In fact, the government still owns and operates the line.

However, privatization in some form or another may come about before long. While in Ecuador this past August, I heard talk that the government was anxious to be rid of the railroad; a date in 1998 was mentioned. Whether anything will come of it remains to be seen—no one has been willing to take the blame for actually eliminating trains and service.

Since 1995, Trains Unlimited, Tours has returned to Ecuador annually to run week-long charter steam train trips between Guayaquil and Quito. For information about possible trips in 1998, contact Trains Unlimited, Tours at P.O. Box 1997, Portola, CA 96122, (916) 836-1745.

Incidentally, this past August I saw quite a lot of activity on the railway. There was a daily *mixto* between Riobamba and Bucay, with twice-weekly service all the way to Durán/Guayaquil. I didn't travel north of Alausí, but rumor had it there was a *mixto* running between Riobamba and Quito as well. In addition, Metropolitan Touring of Quito was running extensive charter railbus service.

So, as of August 1997, the Ferrocarriles Ecuatorianos was alive and, if not exactly prospering, then at least continuing to hang on.

Sincerely,
James B. Armstrong

To the Editor,

The simple way to jerry-rig e-mail with tildes ("Tildes (and More) at Your Fingertips," Issue 48, Summer 1997) is to drop an "i" into the word after the "n." Thus the word *año*, which would normally appear in the e-mail as *ano*, or "rectum" (resulting in the inadvertently repulsive "yo tengo 54 anos"), becomes *anio*. That's the way my Latin American e-mail correspondents handle it.

Sincerely,
Daniel Buck

To the Editor,

As I see it, at the present time the *South American Explorer* is quite a distance away from the early publications with lots of authentic explorers stuff. South America has countless of such subjects to offer. But, where are the Livingstones and Stanleys of today? Where are the modern Schiliemanns, Amundsens, and Sven Hedins? Is nobody present to contribute genuine adventure stories? I'm sure the continent is still the stage of great adventure.

Perhaps *SAE* will open its pages again to the rovers and explorers that roam the travesías and the thicket.

Don't take this amiss—it's just a suggestion. I have all the issues from #1 on in my private library. They are worn out after being read by yours truly so many times, but lately there's not a lot of exciting stuff to read over and over. I'm sure to find fascinating articles again soon.

Yours as ever,
Federico B. Kirbus

Editor's note: Clearly, Federico is right, except that the problem he refers to is not editorial but the result of sluggishness, sloth, even torpidity on the part of the membership. Of course, we have been aware of this problem for some time now (see p. 49, Issue #49) *and are working on it. In the meantime, anyone engaged in a genuine adventure is urged to capture it in 3000 words of pithy, gripping prose and submit it to the* South American Explorer *with teeth-sucking photos, a short bio, and sketch map.* ♣

MEMBERS,

let's face it. Maybe not this week, maybe not even in the next century, but sooner or later, there's going to be nothing left to explore. Every mountain in Patagonia will bristle with pitons, every peak will have fifty cairns on its summit with little notes saying "Maude and I took the north face." Every beetle will be pithed, every butterfly mounted, every species tracked down, labeled, classified, and analyzed. Somebody somewhere will have run every river—downstream, upstream, and sideways. When that day comes, the *Guinness Book of World Records* will be a compilation of the trivial—wads of gum chewed in an hour, etc. Exploration will be dead.

Where does that leave you? Actually, nowhere. You'll be dead, too. But no matter. Whether you know it or not, your real purpose here on earth was never to explore, or even to benefit yourself, your species, or your ecosystem. Your goal, dictated by the rigid law of evolution, is simply to maximize the number of copies of the genes that

made you *you* in the first place. Did you do a good job at this? Only time will tell. But whatever. That's what evolution is all about—to maximize the number of copies of your genes.

Maybe you think you're doing OK—a couple of kids in college, another bun in the oven, even a grandkid or two with a distinct family resemblance.

Big deal!

First of all, that grandkid is not even *you*. At best, that kid only carries *one-fourth* of your unique genetic self. True, you can't do much better these days, given the way things are done—courting, mating, reproducing, rearing. But that's the way things are. Is that grim or what?

Well, get a grip. There's more bad news. That DNA segment that brought you to the South American Explorers Club in the first place, let's call it the Explorer Gene, used to give you a decided edge in the struggle for survival. But as we approach the 21st century, that very gene is a handicap in the lottery of natural selection. In our decadent world, the couch potato, the suburbanite, the Sunday golfer is king. The fate of explorers, if they survive at all, will be to peer through asylum bars, wander the railroad tracks, commit suicide. There is no place for the eagle in a world of chickens.

So let's be up-front about this. Right now, your very best shot is not up to scratch. Do you want to lose out in the great race of evolution or what? Well, listen up. Evolution is a lot more complicated than it seems. For starters, "survival of the fittest" doesn't mean stiffing your neighbor, running some motorist off the road, machine-gunning kids in the local school yard.

Quite the contrary, all sorts of goody-two-shoes things like decency, loyalty, and altruism might be just what's required by evolution for you to get your genes launched into the future. Maybe even prompt and generous payment of membership dues to the right outfit is the ticket. Something to think about, huh?

And there's more. Have you ever stopped to think about the evolutionary purpose of your membership in the South American Explorers Club? Probably not. But a lot of what works, evolutionarily speaking, is subconscious. So now that you know, you might want to give this subject a little more attention. The alternative may well be genetic oblivion.

Now, it's true that viewed superficially, the perks of Club membership seem mundane—a laminated membership card, access to trip reports, a place to store your gear, a magazine subscription, free coffee. But in the great scheme of things, maybe that's not what it's all about. Maybe there's something your Club and Charles Darwin know that you don't. For example, did you know that people lose about 40,000 skins cells every day? The cells leave a trail when people walk around. Incidentally, that's what a hound smells when it follows the scent of a person.[1]

So what? Well, every skin cell of yours drifting about is a perfect, minuscule hologram containing all the DNA required to make another *you*. So, let's say you visited the Ithaca, Lima, or Quito Clubhouse recently and bumped against a Club desk, used the phone, took off a sweater, or twitched your nose. With that simple act, you sprayed forth a cloud of genetic dandruff. Even if you just stood around moulting, you probably sloughed off enough DNA to produce five thousand replicas of *you*ness.

What has all this got to do with anything? Members, the time has come to reveal what may be the greatest membership perk of *all time*. Up until now, we've kept Operation MPP under wraps, a closely guarded secret. We had to be cautious, lest the genetically challenged storm the Club.

So what is MPP? Simply stated, it is the South American Explorers Club Member Perpetuation Project. Believe it or not, every month for twenty years without fail, the Clubhouses have taken air samples. Club air preserved in glass vials contains countless member skin cells. It goes without saying, we cannot disclose the whereabouts of these glass vials, but rest assured—NORAD is more vulnerable to an atomic attack than this precious material.

Honored members, in these vials is your genetic legacy to posterity. When distant galaxies cry out for colonists, when the search is launched to find explorers to contact other civilizations, to go where no carbon-based individuals have gone before, your DNA, dormant and neglected for perhaps millennia, will be a godsend. And where will they find your precious deoxyribose nucleic acid? In the South American Explorers Club Gene Vault.

Yes, members, in the distant future, they'll be able to reproduce *you*, an exact, identical replica of the unadulterated you, true down to every freckle, hair follicle, hang nail, and dimple. And thanks to the South American Explorers Club and its visionary leadership, you will live again to replicate in distant galaxies, sowing your DNA across infinity.

The end of evolution is at hand. When the great day dawns, your clone will throw open the cover of the incubation and resuscitation chamber and stride out to meet its chromosomal destiny. For the first time, evolution will be stood on its head: An organism will be matched

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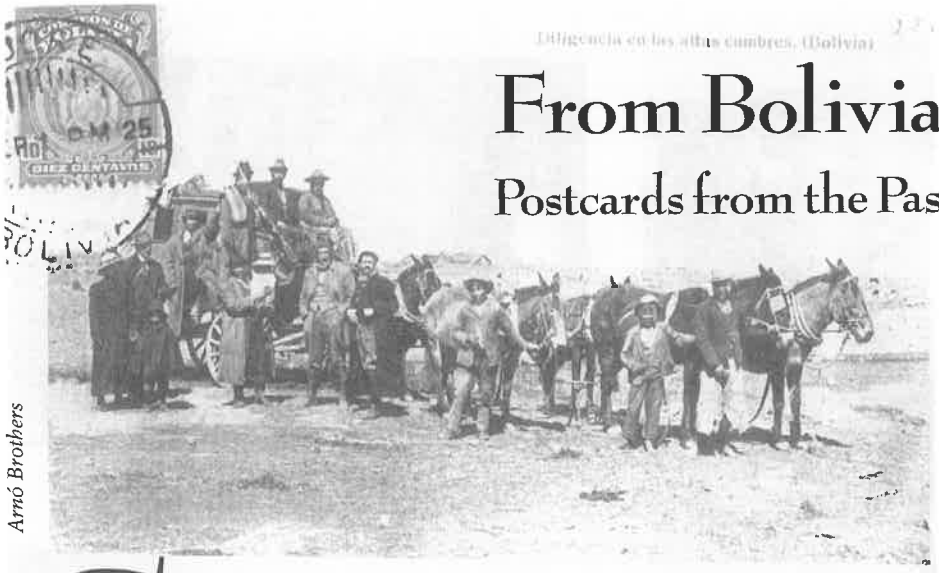

Arnó Brothers

From Bolivia with Love

Postcards from the Past

Daniel Buck

Given the speed of travel in the early twentieth century, Bolivia was a long way from anywhere, even its immediate neighbors. The journey Buenos Aires–La Paz, for example, took several weeks by train and stagecoach. But however land-locked, the Andean nation's remote-ness did not make it immune to the international crazes of the era. When postcard mania swept the world between the *fin de siècle* and World War I, Bolivia was swept right along with it.

Consider the ordinary postcard: An inexpensive picture on stiff paper bought by a tourist killing time. The picture of a landscape or the people might reveal the customs of the country.

a double-sided icon

But flip the postcard over. It is a double-sided icon. The message on the back, scrawled in a taxi or crafted with care at a sidewalk café, yields clues about the folkways of the tourist. Antique postcards are all the more intriguing because both image and message are from a different era.

Postcard Pedigree

The postcard was born in the 1860s. Austria, England, Switzerland, and the United States all claim paternity. By the 1890s, the postcard's popularity had blossomed globally. A Scottish newspaper in 1903 glumly predicted that within ten years, "Europe will be buried beneath picture postcards." Across the Atlantic, New York City was doing its share of the shoveling; by 1912, the metropolis claimed 124 postcard wholesalers and retailers.

Like most innovations, postcards did not win immediate acceptance. Postal regulations that permitted mailing postcards without envelopes—for a pittance, no less—horrified some. Richard Carline notes these objections in his informative history, *Pictures in the Post.* "The postman, not to mention the maid, will know our business," demurred the discreet. An 1890 etiquette manual primly warned: "Don't conduct correspondence on postal cards. It is questionable whether a note on a postal card is entitled to the courtesy of a response." Postmen weren't keen on the cards either—more mail, more work.

Although society's literary watchdogs predicted the end of letter writing, the postcard marked the advent of pithy prose. For travelers suffering scribbler's block, though, one guidebook offered a potpourri of fitting reflections: "Arrived here safely. Charming scenery," etc.

Postcards did not suddenly arrive in turn-of-the century mailboxes out of the blue. They had a long pedigree. As the historian Frank Staff puts it, the "postcard was not invented. It evolved." Decorated playing cards with intricate designs drawn by leading artists first appeared in Italy in the fourteenth century. As printing progressed from woodblocks to metal plates, cheap prints and broadsides (the latter peddled by obnoxious, horn-tooting street vendors) appeared. Calling cards, some dressed up with landscapes or architectural views, sprang up in the seventeenth century. By the early eighteenth century, British postmen regularly delivered decorative stationery and envelopes

Daniel Buck is a South American Explorer *contributing editor.*

Compañía Huanchara de Bolivia

Luis J. deNotta

Rodolfo Torrico Zamudio

Annie Peck

Luis J. de Notta

Grupo de llamas. La Paz - Bolivia

In just a month I will be ready to start for home, but not on the back of a llama.

H.

Luis J. de Notta

Tembetas de Cordillera de Santa Cruz Bolivia.

Annie Peck

emblazoned with cartoons or resort scenes. One enterprising printer created the Saint Valentine's Day envelope, the forerunner of today's greeting cards. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tradesmen promoted their services with advertising cards. *Cartes de visite*—photos or illustrations affixed to small cards—became the rage during second half of the nineteenth century. People handed them out as calling cards or collected them like the baseball cards of today.

Technology and consumerism influenced the evolution of postcards. Developments in photography such as smaller cameras and rolled film accompanied improvements and economies in printing. In Hal Morgan and Andreas Brow's classic study, *Prairie Fires and Paper Moons: The American Photographic Postcard, 1900–1920*, John Baskin points to the daguerreotype and stereograph as the nineteenth-century predecessors of the photographic postcard. Postcards represent a logical step in the history of photography and printing. Costing a penny and half the postage of a letter, the postcard caught the public's fancy—an international craze was born.

postcard mania was a phenomenon

Making a Scene

At its peak, postcard mania was a phenomenon. Consider the volume: In one year, the Japanese tossed 500 million cards into the mail. In 1903, the British clogged their postal system with more than 600 million. Even that was a drop in the mailbox compared to Germany's boggling billion postcards a year. Frank Staff says the "illustrated postcard craze [was] like the influenza" in the speed it spread from country to country. No postal figures are available for Bolivia, but postmarks on surviving cards indicate that postcard fever was in full swing by the early 1900s.

Riffle a box of vintage Bolivian postcards and you'll find scenes of market ladies bantering in Oruro, llama caravans on the *altiplano*, *Machetero* dancers strutting in Trinidad, Sunday-strolling upper-class *Paceños*, elegant *cholitas* in La Paz, Gran Chaco *indígenas* eyeing the camera, and mule-drawn stage coaches on mountain passes. Bolivia's leading photographers (and a few notable foreigners) knew their market. Postcards from this period were definitely seen as a form of entertainment for sender and recipient alike.

Leading Bolivian-postcard entrepreneurs, like José Piérola and Luis D. Gismondi, had studios in La Paz and lent their photographic skills to the souvenir trade. You can pick out a Piérola with your fingers —his signature is embossed on the corner. Piérola specialized in real-photo postcards made with actual photographs rather than the offset-printed variety. He could do this thanks to new cameras and developing machines introduced in 1902 by the Eastman Kodak Company. Real-photo cards had another advantage—the photographer could produce them himself and bypass the overseas printing companies.

Cochabamba native Rodolfo Torrico Zamudio, nicknamed *el Turista*, roamed Bolivia's far corners, from the Andean highlands to the *oriente* lowlands, a walking stick in one hand and a camera in the other. He worked with the Arnó brothers, stationers and prolific card publishers in La Paz and Cochabamba. (More than six hundred of Torrico's photographs are featured in a 1925 album, *Bolivia Pintoresca*).

Gran Chaco *indígenas* eyeing the camera

Biggemann & Co. printed postcards of Tiwanaku and Potosí, crediting the photographs to Arturo Posnansky, an Austrian immigrant, photographer, and self-styled archaeologist. But acknowledging the photographer was the exception. Not only were most photos printed anonymously, the same scenes showed up on cards of different publishers, sometimes as a real-photo card, a black-and-white lithograph, or a chromolith.

Several foreign photographers stand out. Annie Peck, an American mountain climber, shutterbug, travel writer, lecturer, and outspoken feminist, made thwarted attempts on Mt. Illampu in 1903 and 1904. She was more successful as a photographer. Peck financed her expeditions by selling a rainbow-hued set of eight postcards during her lecture tours. These shots of La Paz, Lake Titicaca, Sorata, and Mt. Illampu were polychromes printed on German state-of-the art presses that produced a clearer impression than offset lithography, which left a haze of tiny dots on the image.

Around 1920, the New York-based Hispanic Society of America printed a series of real-photo cards of Bolivia as part of a larger assortment covering the entire continent. The Bolivian postcards are of La Paz street scenes, Andean market women, and fishermen poling their

balsas (canoe-like boats made of totora reed) on Lake Titicaca. One card of an altiplano schoolhouse shows some thirty boys, their desks, a globe, an abacus, and a stern-faced teacher, all assembled in the schoolyard.

Arequipeño Max T. Vargas is as well known both for his work and for training Martín Chambi, Peru's most celebrated photographer. In the early 1900s, he had a studio on the Plaza Murillo in La Paz. His imposing portraits of *cholas*, marked with his stylized MTV monogram, are collectors items today.

Guillermo Manning and Arturo Cruz, whose cards bear the "Manning x Cruz" imprint, established themselves in Tupiza in southern Bolivia. Manning was the son of a Confederate soldier who fled to Peru after the Civil War. Manning migrated to Bolivia, first to Uyuni and later to Tupiza, where he ran an import-export business and served as Argentine consul. He and Cruz, whose origins are obscure, got hooked on photography while taking company photographs for *Aramayo, Francke y Compañía,* and the *Compañía San Juan de Oro*. The latter was a chain of five stock companies financed in Buenos Aires and London to run gold dredges on the San Juan River in southern Bolivia. Manning was a stockholder in the enterprise, which went bankrupt around 1910, amidst rumors that its original test bores had been salted with gold to entice investors.

Manning and Cruz, however, struck pay dirt with their postcards. These endure today not only as evocative images of mining life in southern Bolivia, but also as scenes of localities prominent during the final days of two of the Wild West's most wanted outlaws, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, who had fled to South America in 1901.

Butch-and-Sundance-slept-here

Butch and Sundance robbed a payroll belonging to the Aramayo mining company. Before and after this hold-up, they stayed with a British engineer at his lodgings in Verdugo and Tomahuaico. Both these Butch-and-Sundance-slept-here spots appear on Manning and Cruz postcards.

designed to discourage kibitzers

Other mining enterprises publicized their business with souvenir postcards. For instance, the Chilean-owned *Compañía Huanchaca de Bolivia* issued a series of black-and-white lithographic cards. What benefit the company expected is unclear. The cards show desiccated hills, bleak mining camps, austere grass-spiked pampas, and armed, glowering foremen. Maybe the images were designed to discourage kibitzers.

Even missionary orders were not above passing out illustrated postcards (one postcard is worth a thousand sermons) attesting to their good works overseas. The French-based Redemptorist Fathers ran missions in La Paz and Tupiza. The Fathers compiled a booklet of sixteen sepia-tinged photogravure cards, *Chez les Indiens de Bolivie*, portraying themselves and the pagans they had come to save.

Wish You Were Here...

Sometimes the message on the card is of greater interest than the picture. Foreign tourists were known to write sardonic or derogatory comments about the picture on their cards, whereas the locals usually ignored it, treating the card as simply a cheap way of correspondence.

Until 1907, the International Postal Union required that the address occupy the entire back side of the card—deltiologists (post card buffs) call these "undivided backs." The sender was obliged to scribble the message on the picture side—around the edges or all over the image itself. In 1907, the rules changed. Address and message shared the same side. These cards are "divided backs."

Early in 1905 while on a mining mission to Bolivia, H.C. Robinson sent a postcard of dancers near Tiwanaku to his wife, Lizzie, in Portland, Maine:

> Dear Lizzie, This is the place where most of the antiquities are dug up in Bolivia. There appears to be an indian feast here now and I don't know but the indians are as much curiosities as the uncovered curios. This picture well represents the animated scene at their fairs. Lovingly H.

A week later, Lizzie received another card of a festival on the slopes of La Paz. On it, her loving husband brought her up to date on his work, while denouncing local customs:

> I have some excellent specimens of tin and silver ore, also some

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Body of Evidence

The Mummy of Wariwilka

Dr. Karl Reinhard
Photos by Lucho Hurtado

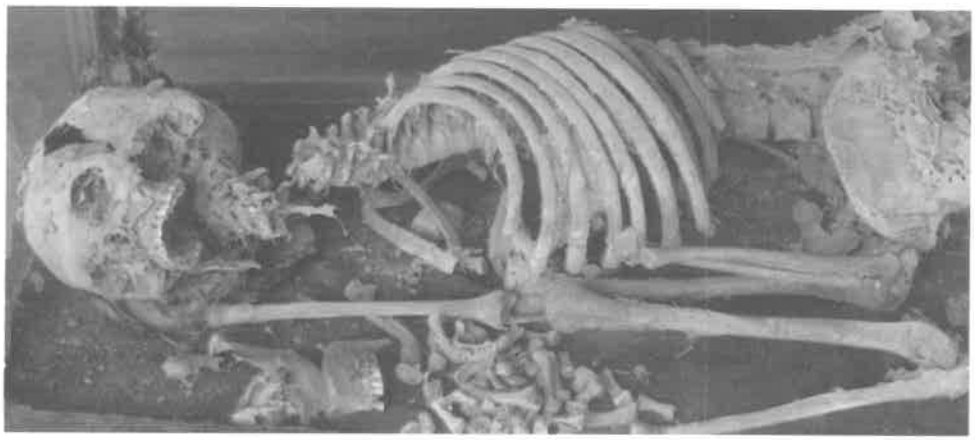
I am a physical anthropologist who specializes in the study of mummies and the forensic investigation of death. In Lincoln, Nebraska, I am the expert consultant in the investigation of homicides.

My wife and I visit Huancayo, Peru for a month to learn Spanish to facilitate our joint work with South American mummies. I also want to escape the more grisly aspects of my work. However, like many forensic anthropologists have found, homicide cases are unavoidable, even when traveling far from home.

Our hosts in Huancayo, Beverly Stuart and Lucho Hurtado, introduce us to the culture and archaeology of the Mantero Valley and the two premier archaeologists of Huancayo, Sergio Castillo and Manuel Gonzalo Calderón Lozo. Through Beverly and Lucho, we also meet a fifth individual who soon becomes a significant part of our lives—the Mummy of Wariwilka.

put to death as part of an ancient Andean ceremony

On a preliminary visit to the Wariwilka site, we find that the mummy shows signs of a violent end. The gaping hole in the left side of the skull is disturbingly similar to several homicide cases I investigated in Nebraska. However, the story of the mummy's death is more complex than a mindless murder. The mummy was discovered buried with textile artifacts and maize in the Wariwilka ceremonial complex. Tied to one of its legs is a bird of prey. Archaeologists believe that this individual was put to death as part of an ancient Andean ceremony.



On a second visit, we analyze the mummy in depth.

Dr. Karl Reinhard is a forensic anthropologist based in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The primary goals of our analysis are to determine the sex and age of the individual, evaluate the individual's pathology when it was alive, determine the cause of death, and finally, ascertain the placement of the corpse after death. Before we can proceed with the analysis, we have to determine whether the mummy has degenerated since it was discovered in the 1960s.

My wife, Debra K. Meier, an expert in the preservation and exhibition of natural history specimens, analyzes the mummy's post-excavation degeneration. First, she studies the light conditions in the Museo del Sitio de Wariwilka where the mummy is on exhibit. Debra determines that the light conditions are optimal for mummy preservation. Secondly, she looks into the general environmental conditions. Again, she finds them as ideal for the preservation of organic archaeological remains. Finally, Debra examines the mummy for evidence of decomposition, a common condition of mummies on exhibit. She has found in her previous research that insects, especially beetles, frequently infest mummies on exhibition. In the case of the Wariwilka mummy, however, there is no evidence of insect activity either in the display case or on the mummy's surface. The Wariwilka mummy also shows no signs of mold, another problem with mummies. As a result, there is no evidence of biological degradation of the mummy since it was excavated. The force of gravity can cause mechanical damage to fragile, mummified remains, but here, too, Debra finds little damage. The jaw, held in place by soft tissue, has broken off since excavation. However, the jaw and all the teeth are present in the exhibit case. In conclusion, the mummy is in excellent condition and shows no significant signs of degeneration since excavation.

Side view of the Wariwilka site.

As with forensic cases in Nebraska, Debra and I look for evidence of sex and age. Anthropologists have developed a number of bone-study techniques that aid in sex determination. Soft tissue covering bones hinders bone analysis. In the Wariwilka mummy, much of the soft tissue has decomposed over time and reveals important bone indicators of sex. The skull does not indicate one sex over the other. The jaw is more masculine than feminine, but the shape of the eye orbits and the bone just above the eyes exhibit characteristics of both sexes. We move on to the pelvic girdle. The broad angle where the pubic bones meet in front of the pelvic girdle shows that the Wariwilka mummy is a female.

Next, we tried to determine the age of the woman at the time of death. All the teeth are completely erupted, indicating an individual older than 19-20 years of age. Little wear of the teeth is evident, although prehistoric people commonly ate abrasive foods. They also engaged in other activities, such as stripping fibers with their teeth, that resulted in dental wear by their mid-thirties. Some wear of the mummy's lower right front molar was evident, probably from processing fibers for weaving. However, an overall lack of dental wear indicates that the woman was relatively young when she was killed.

it is clear that two violent blows to the skull killed this young woman

The bones provide better evidence of age at death. Two areas are of particular importance. They are the upper hip (anterior iliac crest) and the collar bone (clavicle). Of all bones, these two are the last to mature. We conclude that the woman was killed between the age of 20 and 25 because the epiphyses, separate bones that unify at maturity, in both areas are incompletely fused.

It is clear that two violent blows to the skull killed this young woman. On the left side of the skull is a hole 2.4 centimeters long and 0.9 centimeters wide. The bone fractured away from the hole, on the inside of the skull. This is typical of "blunt force trauma" seen in modern forensic investigations. The soft tissue, scalp, and hair surrounding this hole pulls away from the hole in a way characteristic to cranial injuries. Blunt force trauma also caused the second hole, 4 cm by 3 cm, on the front left side of the skull. Two large fractures zig-zag away from this hole, one to the base of the skull, and one to the

front of the skull. Another fracture is present in the pelvic girdle on the pubic bone. It is impossible to determine whether this fracture occurred before or after death.

Once we determined the cause of death, we could go on to investigate how the corpse was treated after death. We find no attempt at artificial mummification or other preparation of the body. This is what experts call a "skin and bones mummy." Only the musculature, skin, hair, and bones are preserved. The internal organs have disintegrated. The lack of internal organs is not surprising. After death, internal organs undergo autolysis, a process of decomposition. During autolysis, organs disintegrate at the cellular and tissue level until completely destroyed. Surprisingly, eyes, nose, and facial tissue are well-preserved.

While there is no evidence of modern insects, we find abundant evidence of ancient insect activity—bore holes from flesh-eating beetles on the right side of the skull and fly pupa cases in the hair and body cavity. Since beetles enter bodies from the ground, we can tell that the right side of the skull was in contact with the ground and that insects infected the body after death. It takes several weeks for extreme insect activity to develop, so it is certain the body lay exposed on the ground for several weeks. Finally, the blood matting the woman's hair under the right side of the skull indicates that the body fell on the right side and was left in that position.

It is probable that death occurred where the mummy was found, inside the Wariwilka temple complex. Following the homicide, the body was left to putrefy in the open for several weeks, then covered with earth. Thus, most, if not all, of the decomposition occurred before the body was covered. Once buried, decom–position stopped.

By examining the soft tissue, skeleton, and teeth of mummies, we can extract much information about the activities and diet of ancient peoples. In the case of the Wariwilka mummy, analysis of the bones and soft tissue must await further, more detailed studies. However, the teeth of the mummy tell us something about this woman's life. As previously mentioned, one molar shows the slight wear typical of those who use their teeth to process tough vegetal fibers. We conclude, therefore, that the woman wove mats and baskets from coarse fibers she stripped from leaves with her teeth. The three cavities in the tops of the crowns, on the chewing surfaces, and the two at the base of the crowns are typical of a high carbohydrate and sugar diet. In the left jaw, the cavities in the crowns extend to the roots and infected the adjacent bone. On the opposite side of the jaw, a similar infection produced the abscess and loss of one tooth long before the death. One is tempted to conclude that, given the presence of dental disease typical of a high carbohydrate diet, this young woman belonged to a high social class—a class sufficiently affluent to afford such foods. Such a conclusion must await further comparisons with other skeletons when these become available. Also, the extra molar this woman has in her upper jaw may be a genetic trait traceable to a distinct portion of the population.

The woman was beaten long before she died—one of her front teeth is broken and blackened. In my examinations of skeletons and mummies in Peru, the rate of interpersonal violence is low. For example, in the case of the 131 Formative Period skeletons I studied recently with one of my students, Gretchen Nelson, we uncovered only two incidents of violence, in both cases broken noses. In all the 180 Peruvian mummies I helped dissect, only one showed evidence of lethal violence. Violence in ancient Peru often occurred in ritual context. Such is the case with the Wariwilka mummy. Since she was found in a Wari temple complex with a bird of prey tied to her foot, we assume she was a human sacrifice.

a bird of prey tied to her foot

Questions surrounding the Wariwilka mummy must await further study. When was she killed? What was her diet? From what diseases did she suffer? What sort of work did she do? We are currently applying to the National Institute of Culture for permission to examine bone samples. Answers will come by carbon dating her bones. Chemical analysis of her bones will tell us the amount and kind of meat and plants she ate. Analysis of hair samples will detect chemicals characteristic of coca use. Radiographic analysis will reveal childhood illness, tumors, fractures, and signs of infectious disease. Analysis of her musculature will tell us what activities she performed. The analyses we propose are either nondestructive or use very small bone and tissue samples.

With the techniques and skills available to physical anthropology, we have already learned a great deal about the mummy of Wariwilka. There is still much to learn. Answers to the mysteries and secrets of the Wariwilka mummy will come as other specialists in different fields continue our investigation. ♣

Conserving Mummies

A Problem for Museums

Debra K. Meier

Mummies and their artifacts are especially important because they convey more information than any other single type of archaeological find. However, for museum exhibition and preservation specialists, mummies present special problems. One problem is due to the diversity of artifacts found with mummies. Besides the mummy itself, a typical South American mummy bundle contains cloth, ceramic, leather, bone, shell, metal, fiber and wood artifacts. Each type of artifact has specific needs for preservation. Besides the problem of taking care of a diversity of artifacts, the mummies sometimes decay. The process of decay can take many years, but the end result is the loss of an important specimen. It is the rare museum that has the money and expertise to take permanent care of mummies.

Take a close look at mummies as you visit museums. You can see the process of mummy decomposition before your eyes. Oftentimes, you will see tiny holes in the skin and even bones of mummies. Sometimes you will see brownish dust on the floor of the museum case. Both are the result of insect activity. In the summer of 1996, I surveyed museums in Peru for evidence of decompositon. I found that insects are the biggest destructive problem for mummies. They literally eat the mummies. Sometimes the insects destroy mummies in a matter of months. However, some mummies have harbored insect infestations for over 2 decades.

There are other kinds of decompostion you can't see with the naked eye. The activity of bacteria and molds also contribute to mummy decay. It is assumed that molds are very destructive by many experts. However, the exact impact of molds and bacteria have not been evaluated for South American mummies. In the fall of 1996, I began to examine skin tissue of mummies from the Moquegua Valley of southern Peru with a scanning electron microscope or SEM. With the SEM, I could magnify the surface features of mummies many thousands of times to look at the details of the skin surface. The strands of fungus, called hyphae, were present on the surface of some samples. Clearly, molds were growing on the surface of some mummies, but I saw no evidence of destruction of the surface of the mummy by the mold. The conclusion of preliminary examinations is that molds do grow on mummies, but whether or not they pose a significant danger to the preservation of mummies remains an open question. This is because molds grow on the surface of the mummies and digest material in their immediate vicinity. Unlike insects, they do not burrow below the surface.

Chemical destruction of mummies, especially in museums located in large cities or near industrial sources of air pollution, is also a potential problem. However, this threat to the preservation of mummies has not yet been evaluated. In theory, the most serious threats would be sulfuric acid and soot. Sulfuric acid results from sulfur emissions combined with fog. Sections of the Andean coast have the right conditions to produce sulfuric acid in the atmosphere. Potentially, sulfuric acid would break down the proteins of mummy tissue. Exhaust and industrial soot may be deposited on the surface of mummies and contribute to loss of the esthetic appeal of mummies. Modern museums and mummy analysis facilities must be built far away from sources of atmospheric pollution.

Besides biological and chemical threats to mummy preservation, mechanical stresses can fracture mummies. Mummies from South America, especially from the Atacama region, are preserved by drying. The process of drying leaves the mummies very brittle and fragile. Movement and even storage of mummies can cause them to break, I am currently studying the effects of transport and storage on a mummy that was shipped from Arica, Chile to Lincoln, Nebraska in the late 1800s. Although the mummy appears to be in good shape on the outside, CT-scans of the mummy show mechanical breakage within. This is especially true of the neck region where a crack has formed. This probably effects the vertebral. These problems are probably due to the posture of the mummy on exhibit, in storage, and during shipment which put subtle pressures on the neck.

The preservation of museum collections of mummies is a growing problem. Considering the numbers of mummies that are excavated from the Andean region, there are far too few museologists trained in mummy studies. The monetary cost of controlling decomposition of mummies is too much for many museums. At most museums there is a critical need for air-tight museum cabinets, fumigation equipment, climate control devices, and other expensive measures to preserve mummies. I can only hope that corrections are made for the preservation of mummies before museum collections of mummies are lost. ♣

Debra K. Meier is an expert in the preservation and exhibition of natural history specimens.

Street Scenes

Esta Polunsky

Here in huge, bustling Guatemala City, I'm alone with my back pack without a plan. Still, "Adaptability is everything," I tell myself. "Improvise." Rising to the occasion, I decide to hit the road and get out of this congested and polluted city as soon as possible.

It's pandemonium—everywhere, buses belching black smoke

Finding the bus station is a challenge. I soon find out why—there is no bus station. Instead, the buses have taken over certain streets which serve as *de facto* bus terminals. Also, there are no signs with departures, arrivals, or even destinations. To make up for this, boys are hired to stand near the buses and call out where they're going. It's pandemonium—everywhere, buses belching black smoke. Many wear face masks to filter the filthy air. I want to find the bus to Quezaltenango, but no one is screaming anything that sounds remotely like it. Ah, no wonder—I figure out that certain towns have nicknames. For example, Quezaltenango is "Xela." Well, why not? It's easier to pronounce. I find my bus and climb aboard.

Peering out the dirty windows, I see what looks like a school bus graveyard. On every side are the yellow Blue Bird buses like the one I rode to school when I was a kid. I always wondered where they ended up. Well, here they are, repainted in flashy greens, reds, and blues. The evergreen vinyl seats inside are still the same, but the aisle seems to have gotten narrower. Looking around, I see all the good seats up front are occupied. Further back, I squeeze into a seat. Now I won't have to stand during the whole trip. It's good to sit, but it has its price—I have someone's runny-nosed kid on my lap the entire way.

Xela is a quiet, sleepy town a millennium removed from Guatemala City. Now what? Well, after traveling around Latin America on rudimentary Spanish for nearly five months, I figure it's high time I learn the language. So, for the first time since graduating from college, I enroll in school—Spanish school that is. It's a deal. For $100 a week, I slip into the life of an exchange student and move in with a family that speaks no English. Every day, five days a week, I dutifully trot off to eight hours of Spanish classes. This is more than I did in college to learn Spanish.

The braids act like a weird sort of child magnet.

After a few weeks, I realize I'm learning more Spanish in the plaza, or town square. After class, I wander over to the plaza. I stand out—a strange gringa with braids plastered to her head. But Guatemalans are very social—it never takes long for someone to chat me up. Especially children. The braids act like a weird sort of child magnet. I sit. They come. We talk.

First off, introductions:

ME: *¿Hola, come se llama?*

MARIA: *Me llamo Maria. ¿y tu?*

Here things get tricky. My name? How can I say it without confusing her? *Estar* (to be) is perhaps the most commonly used verb in Spanish. *Esta* means "he/she/it is." When I say "*Me llamo Esta*," she hears "My name it is." The conversation goes something like this:

ME: *Me llamo Esta.*

MARIA: *¿Como?*

ME: *Me llamo es* Esta—*E-ESE-TE-A, no es normal.*

Invariably, this exchange results in total incomprehension. Worse, this happens every time I introduce myself, and every time, I silently curse my mom for not naming me Mary, Lisa, or Karen.

Introductions over, I steer the conversation to other topics my limited vocabulary can deal with. "Family," for instance.

ESTA: *¿Cuanto hermanos tienes?*

MARIA: *Quince.*

ESTA: *¿Cinco?*

MARIA: *No, quince.*

It's my turn to look dumbfounded. *Fifteen* brothers and sisters? I only have *three* younger sisters, and that's

Esta Polunsky has visited Guatemala and Mexico this year in an effort to improve her Spanish through immersion.

bad enough! Even on this basic conversational level, there's something to learn. The children have nieces and nephews that are often older than they are. Grandchildren can be almost as old as the parents' youngest child. This takes a while to sink in. At first, I think there must be some mistake when several children tell me a little boy is their *tio* (uncle). Maybe they don't understand my questions. But no, when I probe further, the little boy really *is* their uncle. Well, well. After days of conversations like this, I get the point—family planning is not big in Guatemala.

madness, a powerful drug, pulling and dragging the country through a frenzied week

In Latin America the plaza is the town meeting place. It's here the political demonstrations and religious festivals take place, peddlers sell their wares, and the townspeople socialize. A damaged but still majestic church rises up on one side of the town square. "What happened?" I ask. "*Terremoto*," I'm told. In the 1970's, a major earthquake destroyed half the building. More than twenty years later, it still hasn't been rebuilt. Still, no one seems concerned. The faithful still flock to the half of the church that still stands.

Over the next few weeks, the hustle and bustle on the plaza picks up. What's going on, I wonder. From my young confidantes in the square, I learn that Semana Santa, or Holy Week, is coming. "It's the biggest religious celebration in Guatemala," they tell me. "You have to see it." Semana Santa, I learn, is observed all over the country, but the most lavish celebration of all is in Antigua. Reminding myself once again that "Adaptability is everything," I hop a bus to Antigua, three hours away.

Antigua is a town of ancient stone buildings and charming churches. All roads lead to the square in the center of town. Like Xela, a massive church dominates one whole side of the main plaza. Quaint shops line quiet streets. Gringos have invaded this pretty city. But the traditions of Semana Santa predate modern Antigua, and for one week a year, the tourists are inconsequential as her ancient cobblestone streets are transformed in a burst of color.

On one level, being here right now is like being in New Orleans for Mardi Gras. A euphoric atmosphere

prevails—madness, as if a powerful drug in the blood of the people is pulling and dragging the whole country through a frenzied week of celebration. Traditional Catholic beliefs mix with the powerful Indian traditions, producing magic.

During Semana Santa, ephemeral *alfombras*, ornate street art of colored sawdust and flower petals, connect all the churches, radiating out like the spokes of a wheel. *Alfombras* of dazzling color link the many celebrations of Christ, uniting all in their holy devotions.

In Antigua, as in other towns, making the *alfombras* is a task given to the most creative. Most of the artwork has religious themes—Christ turning water into wine, healing the sick and the blind, and more. Other *alfombras* are more secular with floral and fruit designs.

Creating *alfombras* takes a great deal of time. For days leading up to Good Friday, the city gradually closes down. It's impossible to drive down the streets as men, women, boys, and girls set about stenciling designs directly on the cobblestones. Then, the creators of the fabulous *alfombras* get down to work. Soon, dust in all colors of the rainbow lights up the stone-gray streets and fills the air while the artists sift colored sawdust through wire mesh.

On the morning of Good Friday, like a roll of thunder, men dressed like Romans and riding horses rouse the city from its slumber. Soon, from churches all over the city, processions emerge. Clad in purple robes, young boys chosen for the honor carry the statues of the

Savior. The joyous throng parades over the alfombras and, with each step, destroys a piece of its transient beauty. Bands play, trumpets blare, and trombones wail. Boys run ahead swinging silver censors of smoking incense. Processions cross and converge causing tumult, but no one minds. Behind the Jesus floats, women carry smaller floats venerating Mary.

with each step, destroys a piece of transient beauty

All over Guatemala, processions wind through the streets of towns, big and small. Down from the hills, the people have come dressed in their finest clothes. Whole families of six, seven, and eight children gaze proudly, caught up in the festivities that link their lives to the Church.

In this glorious week, Guatemalans rich and poor lay aside their worries and woes and give themselves up to Semana Santa. Surrounded by the splendor, chaos, and color, I surrender, too. ♣

Semana Santa Throughout Latin America

Carnal and spiritual, sorrowful and celebratory: Throughout South and Central America, the celebration of Jesus Christ's death and rebirth during Semana Santa, or Holy Week, reveals both Christian and pagan influences. Since the 16th century, artists in Antigua, Guatemala have created intricate alfombras, street carpets of colored sawdust and flowers, as brilliant pathways that connect the churches. On Palm Sunday, as many as 80 float-bearers, or *cucuruchos,* carry huge floats featuring 17th century- carvings. The *cucuruchos* vie for this back-breaking privilege and switch places at every corner. Before dawn on Good Friday, men dressed as Roman Soldiers ride through town proclaiming Christ's impending death. Just after sunrise, a procession bearing a sculpture of Christ on the cross follows the path of the ephemeral *alfombras*—hundreds of feet trod the patterns into obscurity. In a biblical twist that's unique to Antigua, the procession stops at the city jail where two lucky prisoners are chosen to shoulder heavy crosses and join the procession. Later, they are set free.

In Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala, radiantly dressed villagers carry an image of both Christ and Maximón (San Simón), a pagan saint who is pleased with offerings of smoke and alcohol. Villagers mob the Maximón statues for the honor of pouring hard liquor down his throat or lighting his cigar.

The local people of San Ignacio, Chile have their own interpretation of Jesuit missionary teachings. They celebrate Semana Santa with a tumult of theatrics, parades, and fire bombs.

On Monday of Holy Week in Peru, a Christ-like statue of el Señor de los Temblores (the Lord of the Earthquakes) is carried through cities on a bed of red flowers. First performed in 1650, this ritual beseeches Jesus to prevent devastating earthquakes. In front of cathedrals, the processioners use the statue to make the sign of the cross. At this moment, local people prostrate themselves and avert their eyes from the image, believing that Christ is singling out those doomed to die in the coming year. On Good Friday, effigies of Judas, politicians, and other unpopular figures are hung by the neck and set on fire. One popular Holy Week belief in Peru is that since Christ is "dead" for the two days following Good Friday, He is unaware of sins committed during this time. Thus, many people celebrate Friday and Saturday with complete license and no fear of divine repercussions. ♣

Source: *Wild Planet! 1,001 Extraordinary Events for the Inspired Traveler,* by Tom Clynes. The 672-page book is available in travel book stores or through the author. Call toll-free 1-888-699-3378.

Amazon River Adventure

In 1948, eighteen-year old Jack Schultz set forth from Quito, Ecuador on a great adventure. With $21.60 in his pocket, he hoisted his fifty-pound backpack, hiked over the Andes to the jungle, bought the Lizzie, a dugout, and sailed down the Río Napo to Iquitos, Peru. There, he paid eleven dollars for a *casco*, a seventeen-foot dugout he baptized *Sea Fever.* Covering up to 110 miles a day, Schultz reached Manaus, Brazil 2000 miles downriver on his nineteenth birthday.

In Manaus, he got help getting his boat outfitted with sails and a centerboard. He then set out downriver to the sea. Reaching the Atlantic, the lone adventurer raised his sails of striped-awning canvas and sailed north for Miami. Sleeping on board and out of sight of land for up to ten days at a time, he rode the ocean current to Devil's Island and sailed on to Trinidad, where three members of the crew of his famous predecessor Francisco de Orellana had ended their voyage.

Plagued by illness and near-starvation, Schultz arrived safely in Miami, completing a 6000-mile voyage that took him thirteen months. Schultz's epic journey was featured in the February, 1949 issue of *National Geographic Magazine*. Now, almost 50 years later, Jack Schultz looks back on his youthful feat.

A Tale Untold:

Looking Back on an Epic Adventure

Jack Schultz
Ink drawings by Simon Chapman

Forty-nine years later. Yes, it is so. It continues to be hard to tell about it.

There were not that many days on the Napo. As in life, real life, the difficult is usually gotten through quickly. I often exaggerate to myself, as well as others, about how long each episode lasted.

Tales of explorers, men of persistence and self-discipline, enduring hardship and isolation. How compare my minor journey, an adventure that has to be puffed up and dramatized to give it the illusion of significance?

Indeed, it was almost fourteen months (note that I shy away from the less impressive "thirteen months and some days") from the time I left home until I arrived by canoe in Miami. But hardly fourteen months of high adventure—most days passed tedious and unexciting. Adventure? Perhaps thirty days of uncertainty and danger in all as I traveled alone, paddling down the Amazon. And maybe another thirty days on the open sea, my

Jack Schultz lives in Santa Cruz, California near three of his eight grandchildren. Recently retired from a seven-year stint as Superintendent of Lick Observatory–Mt. Hamilton/UCSC, he is now building a home, storytelling, and occasionally consulting to solve unusual engineering design/construction/expedition problems in the U.S. and abroad.

inexperience exposed to even greater dangers.

this is no record of heroism

However, this is no record of heroism. As best as I can say, this is what I did:

I remember my journey down the middle reaches of the Napo River as one composite day.

Leaving, always leaving some safe, familiar place to continue because I said I would. Each day's fear—enduring the curious, somewhat puzzled glances that seemed to say "What manner of human *is* this, leaving so soon despite our entreaties to stay?"—fear as I push the Lizzie down the mud bank and balance precariously on the flattened seat forming the stern. The current whips the slender dugout away as soon as it is beyond the shore eddies.

a terror in being adrift

I often lie about the Napo, implying I ran 900 miles of whitewater. Most people know something of the high adventure of rafting—the boiling whirlpools and the roar of falls and spray. How can I tell them, tell *you*, what it was like gliding *quietly* on this terrible, swift, brown stream, far too deep for whitewater? Of the immense trees and branches and debris suddenly and silently thrusting up from below?

I glide between walls of greenery, no tree trunks to be seen—only branches and leaves reaching far out from the banks, drooping down to the water and concealing everything that lies behind.

There is a terror in being adrift, cut off from the shore, the land, a place of respite, twenty or thirty feet beyond the wall of menacing foliage. I can hardly feel courageous when, once on the river, I may have to travel perhaps a hundred miles to reach the next *chacra*, or opening in the forest. What if I miss it? What if the river sweeps me past before I see it and can paddle ashore?

And one night, it happens. Dusk is falling. I fail to see a break in the jungle. Perhaps there isn't one, but in the growing darkness, I steer toward the green wall where the current is less strong. Close to the riverbank, I float down a long tunnel, branches overhead trailing in the water, screening the river beyond.

For a while, I glide down this tunnel. There are not many branches to dodge. Far ahead over the water, I see sticking up what looks like a snag. I am going to clear it. As I draw closer, I see it's a snake, six inches of head and neck above the water. It looks at me steadily as the current carries me along. I rest my paddle on my knees and drift by about a foot away. The snake does not seem at all frightened but turns its head slightly as it passes the stern where I sit. It is a quiet encounter. I have no idea how long it is, but from the disturbance in the water I get the impression it is longer than my canoe.

At last, I veer shoreward under the overhanging tangle of branches. Not able to pull the canoe far from the water, I tie it to a branch. Then, having little food, I decide to fish. Uneasy in the gloom, the river slipping by, I toss my line into the brown water. Almost instantly, I catch a fish.

As I pull it up, there's a roiling in the water where I caught it. I sense a great danger from something between the bank and my canoe. The flopping fish seems a deadly sign of something menacing nearby under the brown river. I cut the line and let it plop back into the river. After that, I never fish again on the Napo or on the Amazon—I can't shake the feeling that too many other predators lurk nearby.

something slides past in the darkness

The bank and the thicket of tree trunks beyond take on a dangerous aspect. I tie up to one of the branches trailing in the water twenty feet from

shore. It's a long night in the narrow canoe. No log comes floating down the river in the night to knock me loose, but now and then, *something* brushes up against my canoe and slides past in the darkness.

Each day takes its toll. Uncertainty accumulates like lack of sleep, draining reserves and stamina. It is clear that I have little control over what happens on the river, even though I safely make it through another day. With each day, I improve, learning to paddle and maneuver better. But as the Napo becomes wider and slows down, I become more aware of the quiet and whatever lies beyond the river's green walls and the traces of the trailing leaves in the stream.

no knight was I

As a boy, I absorbed some idea of what it means to be a man. From my father I learned of the virtues of a soldier—loyalty, fortitude, bravery. My model was Sir Gawain who judged selflessly, felt fearful but owned up to it, and disdained all ways save the path of honor. And most of all, he protected the weak, caring for children and women whatever the cost.

Something happened one night on the river. It's why I have taken so long to tell this story. No knight was I.

It is a clearing like all the others—a narrow strip hacked out of the forest down to the steep bank. A muddy gash on the shore is enough for me to pull the Lizzie up away from the river. I see no one at first, although a thin haze of smoke rises from a large house set some distance from the river. Whatever plants grow in this clearing are withered, stunted, the *chacra* exhausted near the end of the slash-and-burn cycle. To clear another from the forest would take immense effort. There is no other dugout canoe on the riverbank.

The house, about twenty-five feet square, is basic—posts sunk into the hard soil support a bamboo floor and a thatched roof. No walls. A notched log serves as stairs to the platform raised six feet above ground.

When I arrive, it is almost dusk. Beneath the platform, a number of fires smolder. Sweet smoke drifts up through the cracks in the bamboo

floor, adding to the shadows of the short jungle twilight. The smoke keeps the mosquitos at bay. A man and a woman appear to be cooking dinner. They are quiet and shy. The man offers no greeting but neither is he threatening. He appears mystified by my presence—where I came from, who I am. He seems not to comprehend Quechua or Spanish, and I cannot understand any of the few words he softly utters.

I gesture for food. The woman is too shy to look at me as she crouches over an earthen hearth. The cooking area is simply dirt heaped on the bamboo floor.

Night falls so suddenly, I see very little of my surroundings. The only light comes from the feeble fire on the cooking hearth. Near the hearth, there seems to be a pile of rags. A little later, I hear a faint mewing sound and see that it is a child wrapped in cloth. The man fades back into the shadows, and the woman neither looks at me nor speaks as she places a few sticks on the fire and cooks.

I see only these three figures on the platform there alone in the clearing. Other beings seem to hover nearby, but this may be only an illusion cast by the dark jungle surrounding the wretched little clearing. There is no wind. The jungle is still. I feel no threat of danger, just very alone and vulnerable. I cannot talk to them, ask them anything, charm them. It is obvious that I am a being outside their experience.

The woman pushes a boiled green plantain toward me. It is starchy and tasteless. There is no other food.

When I have eaten the plantain, the woman finally looks at me. She stirs the fire to make a little more light and picks up her child, opening the tattered bundle for me to see. I cannot tell if it is a boy or a girl in the flickering light, but though very small, the child is not an infant. A rash of infected sores covers much of its body.

Holding the child out toward me, it is clear she wants help, needs medicine. Yet even in this wordless way, it is obviously very hard for her to be assertive.

a rash of infected sores covers much of its body

The child is sick, maybe dying, a frightening thing making claims on my compassion that I cannot meet. In fear and horror, I pull back. Somehow I convey to the woman

that I have nothing in my bag, no medicine, that I cannot help her. I am afraid of her demands on me.

From that night on, I have known my kinship with our civilization's withdrawal from humanity and its reluctance to get involved. All rationalizations are easy, but untrue.

I did have something to give the child—a vial of vitamins. It might not have helped, but it would have lessened the mother's helplessness. I knew then giving the vitamins would be a great kindness. I saw the desperation and knew the mother would see the tablets as an exotic cure for her child, medicine from another world of wealth and power. I saw her belief in whatever I could do.

You see, it was her belief in the im-portance of what I had that ultimately swayed me. I wanted that magic for myself, to protect *me* from the unnameable perils on all sides. I could not bring myself to offer help to the dying child by giving up something that was mine. As one of the rich and powerful, healthy, possessing many options, rather than share what I had, I clung to it. The sickness of our society was already in me—no nobility, no selflessness, no humanity—just me first. And the fear that people more needy than I might pull me down into their desperation.

In the morning, I slid my canoe down the bank to the water, and once more I was swallowed up by the jungle. ♣

Mark Mardon had a six-month internship at the South American Explorers Club in 1980 three years after the founding of the Club. The following are excerpts from a journal he kept at the time.

March 4, 1980

He (a member of the Club) strikes me as typical of about fifty percent of the South American Explorers Club's clientele: college-educated, no definite aims in life, drifting around the world in search of adventure and different life styles. He demonstrates no particular skills and seems intent on drinking himself to death and reminisces about his experiences with drugs in Nepal.

As for the Club itself—physically—it appears slightly shabby, disorganized with books, magazines, maps, boxes, climbing equipment, and assorted whatnot strewn carelessly around the house and spread into every nook and cranny. There are four kittens someone recently adopted and a squawking parrot someone left behind.

April 8, 1980

The Club is non-profit, receives little income, and seems constantly on the verge of collapse, so it is that any noble goals the Club professes are mitigated by the need to collect money just to stay alive.

September 5, 1980

The South American Explorer is a decent magazine. It is destined some day to be published quarterly (it gets published now whenever there's money enough to publish it) and to be the best vehicle for spreading the word about natural history and exploration and appreciation for the environment in South America. One day the Club will be as big and impressive as National Geographic—maybe a hundred years from now, that is. The magazine will never be as beautiful or comprehensive as National Geographic. But it's got something National Geographic doesn't have: a personal, homey touch. There is a small but devoted readership developing throughout the world, and they're spreading the word. ♣

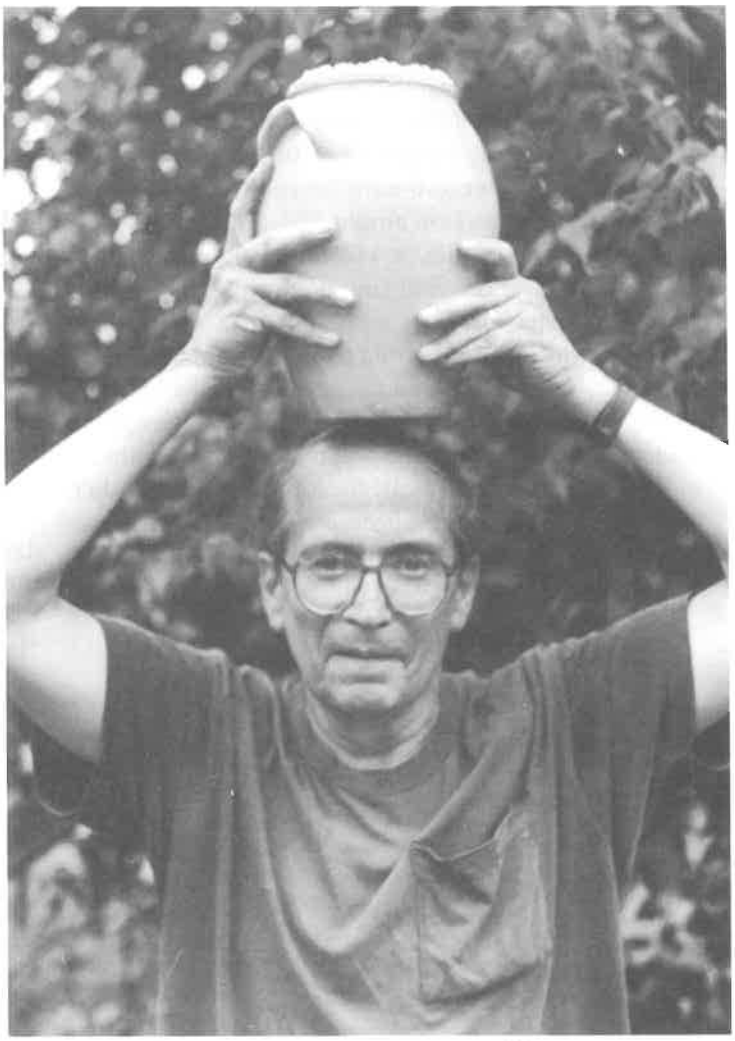
To make sense of the following slice of Club history, refer to the time line beginning on the next page. The Club, founded in Lima, Peru in 1977 was already three years old when the founders opened an office in the Capitol Hill State Bank building at York Street and Colfax in Denver, Colorado and met Doug Vaughan of the local chapter of the International Committee Against Racism, a one-man, one-room operation who befriended the Club in its years of need.

The Lost Years

No Way to Run a Business (let alone a continent)

A Trip Report on the South American Explorers Club's Journey from Lima to Denver to Ithaca.

Doug Vaughan



South American Explorers Club Founder Don Montague under the influence of pot.

Denver, c. 1980:
"I could see greatness as he walked into the room."

Or so Don Montague would like to be remembered on the 20th anniversary of the founding of the South American Explorers Club. At least, that's how he suggested I begin this piece, as an encomium for the Club's Lost Decade.

Recently, I paid the new club headquarters a visit, if not my respects, on my way through the Finger Lakes to a baseball tournament in Cooperstown, home of the Hall of Fame. Montague, of course, has enshrined himself in new lakeside digs in upstate New York. I'd heard he had survived the move to Ithaca, which began—fitfully and fittingly—with the Great Scout himself heading the wrong direction out of Denver. His bride, hunkered down in her Conestoga sport-utility vehicle at some roadside rest in Nebraska, must have thought herself a new-age Penelope, waiting for her wayward husband to find his way back from Utah.

I hadn't seen him in five years. Time enough for wounds to heal. Time to drop in unannounced, maybe cadge a meal.

My father and I drove slowly, conspicuously past the Montague residence in a blue Oldsmobile that looked suspiciously governmental. The old bird emerged from his garage to give us that slightly wary, befuddled look. Squinting Magoo-like, as if we were the Crips about to cap his honky ass and that one-eye-over-the-bifocals glare

Vaughan was a well-paid, highly respected, award-winning journalist and documentary filmmaker who was expelled from most Latin American countries. Then he became a member of the South American Explorers Club.

would deter us. Not! When he finally recognized me—"Vaughan! You old reprobate! What the hell are you doing here?"—the snaggle-puss grin came out. There were fewer strands of hair to pull over his pate, which he covered with a ragged cap—a castrated tam-o'shanter pulled so low over the ears he looked like dwarf Droopy—but it was Don alright.

We met Snow Wife, a woman surely paying dues toward canonization. And son, now peppering Dad to play a compact disc that came out of a cereal box. Montague the Elder is a proud papa. He pointed out the treehouse, whose construction nearly killed him until friends volunteered to take over the project. We toured the house. "Frighteningly respectable, don't you think?" Indeed, and more amazingly, the local burghers hadn't revoked the alpha-male's license to breed. And news: After all these years, he had finally managed to visit the Galápagos.

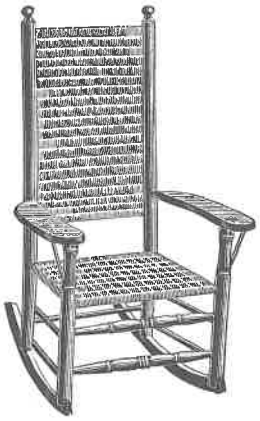
a new-age Penelope, waiting for her wayward husband to find his way back

By feigning enough hem-kissing obsequiousness, I even managed to justify the expense of this excursion into the boonies by wangling a second "Life Membership" in the Club—my third: The first came when I donated rare books, maps and atlases from my forays to South and Central America, back when Montague first landed in Denver. Somehow that had "lapsed," he claimed, when I went off to Aspen to run a daily newspaper in that glorified petting zoo. My Life status was renewed as compensation for debunking the University of Colorado's claim to have "discovered" a "lost city" in Peru. Somehow that expired with the move East and I hadn't received an issue of the magazine since.

FEBRUARY 1977: Don Montague throws up career as Latin American cameraman. Don Griffis of *Lima Times* agrees to fork over subsistence allowance to test club scheme. International Monetary Fund approves $3,900,000,000 loan to Great Britain.

AUGUST, 1977: U.S. Space Shuttle *Enterprise* completes first space flight test. Founders find space for their new enterprise at 146 Avenida Republica de Portugal in Breña, Lima.

OCTOBER 1977: Club buys chair, borrows refrigerator from Ellie Griffis. *Star Wars* released to rave reviews. Lima Club opens to minimal fanfare. First issue of both *Outside* and *South American Explorer* are published. For a while, both publications are neck and neck in readership.



MARCH 1978: Max Eiselin signs on as first Life Member.

APRIL 1978: His Highness Prince Chalermpol of Thailand hands over $500 to become second Life Member. Overjoyed at 200 percent increase in Life Memberships, Club founders resolve to forge on.

FEBRUARY 1978: Club membership approaches 87 dues-paying ($25) members. Club survival doubted amidst heated debate on whether to fold.

"Look yourself up in this fool thing," Montague urged with a dismissive gesture toward a computer. "We are fully computerized, digitized, energized and irretrievably on-line. You cannot be lost. We are omniscient now more than ever." There was no me there. I had been electronically obliterated.

the local burghers hadn't revoked the alpha-male's license to breed

"Who knows how many other potential dues-paying suckers have been wiped off the accounts receivable by that blasted thing!" he said. "It's outrageous." The price of restoring myself to "Life Member in Good Standing" was to write again for the magazine. Like the rump popes of Avignon, the self-proclaimed Explorer-in-Chief from his throne in Ithaca had commissioned his own hagiography.

The way I remember it is this:

While slaving over a hot keyboard in my office, c. 1980 of the Common Era, I heard the metal grates of the old elevator door open amid some unintelligible babbling a floor below. "Can't possibly be," a cranky voice echoed up through the elevator shaft. "Not fit for man nor beast nor hod-carrying prole." Then came the characteristic low rumble, heripilating screech and hydraulic whine as the ancient lift ascended to the second floor. It lurched and rattled to a stop. The doors clanged open and shut again, this time punctuated with muttered threats and barely audible curses as a passenger stumbled over the threshold two inches above where the elevator stopped, then fell into the hallway:

fist-shaking, finger-thrusting, booty-wagging rants

"Ow! Jesus! My toe! My head! Holy Mother of God! What an infernal device! Is there no building code in this benighted city? We'll sue! What was the name of that shyster we met at AA? Look here: I've rent my garment on the damned contraption! Did you see it? Did you see that thing? It snapped at me—the bugger. I've been bloody bludgeoned by the old rattle-trap. Go pick on something your own size, ya misanthropic man-eating..."

APRIL 1979: Club membership tops 140. Stephen Hawking propounds theory of black holes. Denver Club rents a dark hole over New Yorker bar at 2239 E. Colfax Avenue #205 (See Vaughan p. 25) for $75/month.

NOVEMBER 1980: Volunteer recommends Club consider answering member letters. Members applaud.

MAY 1981: Attempt made on Pope John Paul II's life.

JULY 1978: "Test tube baby" born in England. Founders labor over infant *South American Explorer* magazine in Denver.

MAY 1979: Disco hit "YMCA" tops charts worldwide. SAEC hits bottom in Denver.

JUNE 1980: War breaks out between Iran and Iraq. Denver and Lima fight over money. Tension grows. Relations sour. Resentments fester.

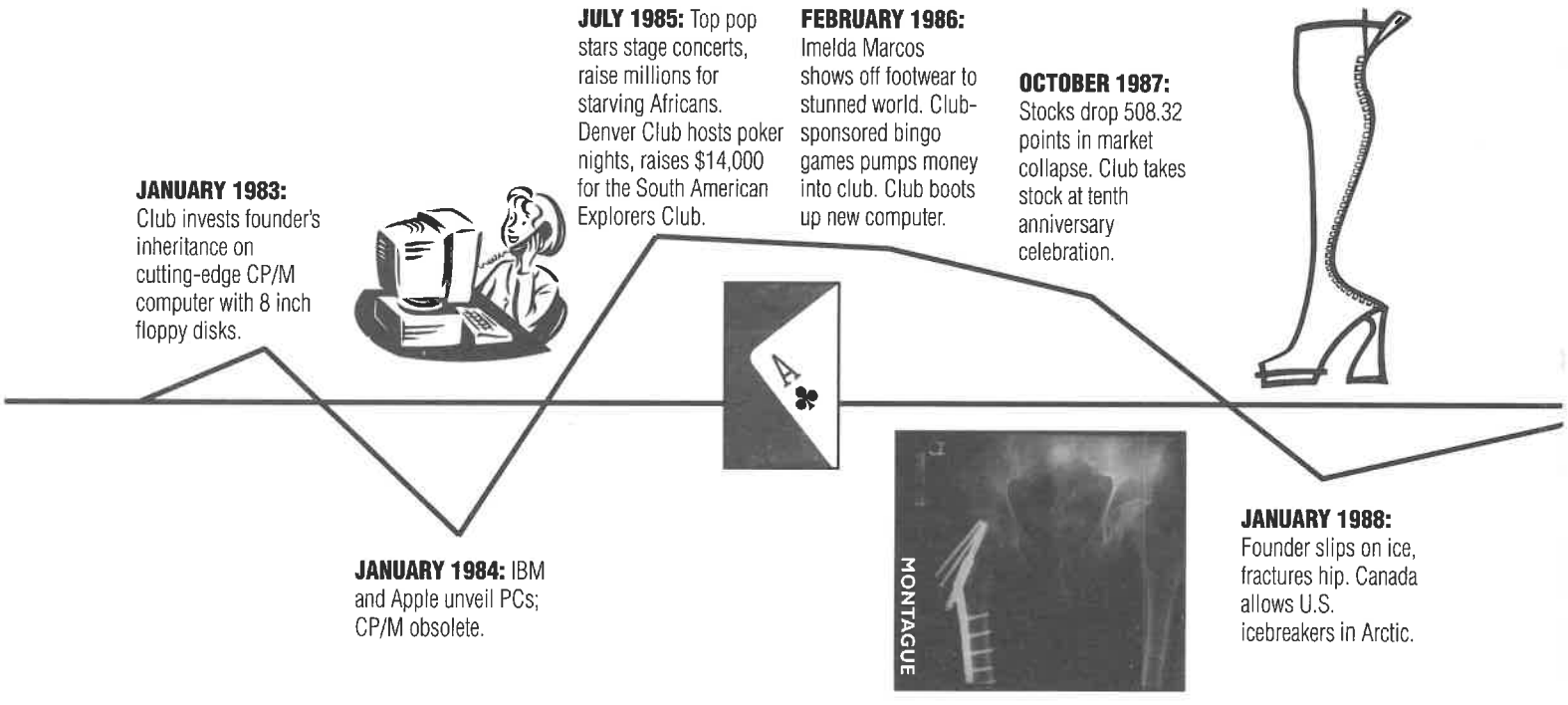
Members call for founder's head when no issues of the *South American Explorer* are published in **1982.**

Directed, as it was, at a machine or to no one in particular, this diatribe was rather meek stuff as epithets go, compared to the fist-shaking, finger-thrusting, booty-wagging rants that issued daily from the usual retinue of reeling drunks, hot-pantsed hookers, leering pimps and beady-eyed crackheads who camped downstairs under the marquee of the infamous New Yorker Lounge at the corner of Colfax and York, sleaziest junction in Denver. That's what I loved about the place—not its alleged antique "charm" but its capacity to offend. That's why I'd picked the old Capitol Hill State Bank building, slipping downward since the Depression, owned by two querelous Jewish rentiers, managed by a whiny and obsequious gentleman, as my place, as the yuppies later put it so smarmily, "to office."

a big, brassy woman with a big, bad mouth

The old bank building was home not only to the denizens of The New Yorker, but headquarters for a panoply of political and environmental groups: Friends of the Earth, run by a bearded, burly tornado-chaser with a 50-pound "portable" Osborn computer and dreams of dethroning Noam Chomsky as linguist-philospher; the Sierra Club, whose sweet secretary would leave for better-paying aggravation as producer of right-wing talk-radio programs; a beatific Solar Power lobbyist and his bookstore; a group that held vigils on the railroad tracks leading to Rocky Flats, the nuclear weapons plant outside town; a big, brassy woman with a big, bad mouth who campaigned against strip-mines; a one-man archive of the Left whose Institute for Radical Studies had an abbreviation that scared potential donors; the local chapter of the International Committee Against Racism (staffed by yours truly); a gay private eye; a smooth-talking, grant-writing, liberal glad-hander who quickly adapted to the treacle-down economics of the Reagan Administration at the expense of his over-worked assistant. It was the latter's road-trip back east, where she fell in love and found a job in community theater, that prompted her boss to find his own calling as a college administrator—and thus created a vacancy in our office co-op.

Enter Montague. The bar's bare-bulbed entry was capped by a neon sign with a foppish, tuxedo'd gent leaning on his cane and doffing his top-hat—an art-deco homage to Eustace Tilley, the monocled dandy who presides over the eponymous magazine's "Talk of the Town" section. The mess that careened from the elevator outside my office door was equally out of place. I peeked out my door to the commotion. He wore a


JANUARY 1983: Club invests founder's inheritance on cutting-edge CP/M computer with 8 inch floppy disks.
JANUARY 1984: IBM and Apple unveil PCs; CP/M obsolete.
JULY 1985: Top pop stars stage concerts, raise millions for starving Africans. Denver Club hosts poker nights, raises $14,000 for the South American Explorers Club.
FEBRUARY 1986: Imelda Marcos shows off footwear to stunned world. Club-sponsored bingo games pumps money into club. Club boots up new computer.
OCTOBER 1987: Stocks drop 508.32 points in market collapse. Club takes stock at tenth anniversary celebration.
MONTAGUE
JANUARY 1988: Founder slips on ice, fractures hip. Canada allows U.S. icebreakers in Arctic.

rumpled plaid shirt threadbare at the elbows, brown corduroys that shined at the knees and rump.

"You there! Diogenes! Does this fire-trap claim a manager, or should we just build a lean-to and break out the ol' mess kit?."

"Third floor," I said. "Ask for Joe."

"Little fella? Myopic? Talks like he needs an artifical larnyx?"

"Inimitable," I said. "Wheezes like a duck with asthma."

"Is there another way up? Ladder, perhaps. Hot-air balloon? That thing you call an elevator tried to decapitate me."

"Doesn't like strangers." I pointed to the back stairs. "You'll find Joe up there on the third circle, sans Beatrice."

another lunatic high on the hormone of the Eighties, preposterone.

Montague shambled up the hall and out of sight. Minutes later, down he came in animated discussion with our parody of a building superintendent, replete with a big ring of keys. "The rent is $75 a month. And we'd like that promptly on the first, if you don't mind," he said, nodding in my direction. "Some people around here don't seem to understand the need for punctuality."

"It'll do nicely, Joe, old man," the new tenant said. "A little seedy now, but a daub of paint here, there a chair—and a whip for me to beat back the mob. And don't fret: Punctual, that's us. We'll set an example for these deadbeats, whip the riff-raff into shape! Impose discipline in the ranks! Chase the money-changers from the Temple! Flush the Augean stable! Make 'em pay."

"When you say 'mob' you don't expect a lot of customers. Do you?"

Poor Joe. He knew he had welcomed another lunatic high on the hormone of the Eighties, preposterone. ♣

[To be continued]

John Hano building, second home of Denver Club

OCTOBER 1988: Denver Club pays rent on time, discusses possibility of publishing *SAE* four times a year. (See Mardon, p. 24)

APRIL 1989: Exxon Valdez oil spill. At last minute, Life Members donate money to open Quito Clubhouse. Oil's well that ends well.

NOVEMBER 1989: Crowds tear down Berlin Wall.

MAY 1989: Promised plaque to honor Founding Members of Quito Club delayed.

Quito Club wall still lacks plaque.

FEBRUARY 1990: Founding Member of Quito Clubs notes absence of plaque honoring Founding Members of Quito Club.

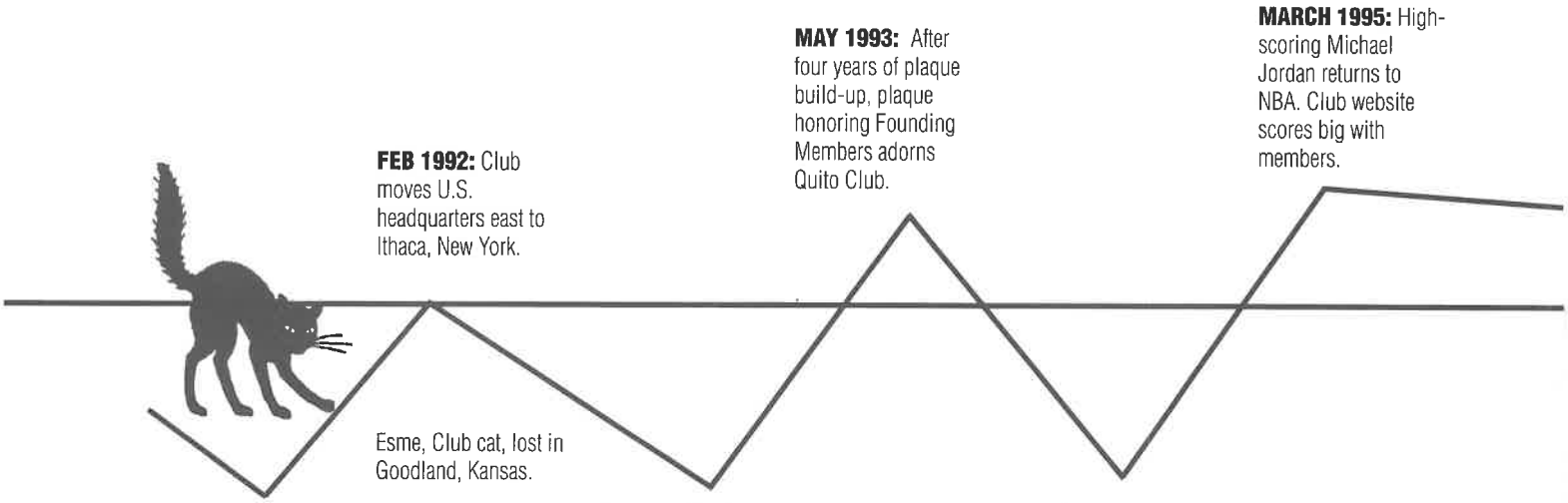
APRIL 1991: Earthquake shakes Lima. Dues hike rattles members.

Club Founder Linda Rosa and member

Chris Cochran, Lima Club Manager 1997

Melanie Ebertz, former Quito Club Manager, now Latin American Representative

Pancha and Juan Carlos (left and bottom), Lima Manager Petra Schepens (center), Secretary Ofelia Lopez (right)


DECEMBER 1991: Further obstacles delay plaque honoring Founding Members of Quito Club.
FEB 1992: Club moves U.S. headquarters east to Ithaca, New York.
Esme, Club cat, lost in Goodland, Kansas.
APRIL 1993: Waco compound burns. Plans to open Bolivia Club go up in smoke.
MAY 1993: After four years of plaque build-up, plaque honoring Founding Members adorns Quito Club.
JUNE 1994: O.J. denies guilt. Club finds increased workload a real killer.
MARCH 1995: High-scoring Michael Jordan returns to NBA. Club website scores big with members.

Connor Nixon, Club supporter and champion

Betsy Wagenhauser, Lima Club Manager and Quito Club Founder

(left to right) Member Lance Dehning and Quito Club Manager (later Ithaca Club Manager) Saoirse McClory and Co-manager Xanthe Cobb

Tom Jackson, Lima Club manager 1979-1981

The infamous Becker

APRIL 1995: Unibomber strikes again. Club booms.

FEBRUARY 1996: Club explains 1986 "Mad Dog Bingo" income to new accountant.

MAY 1996: South Africa ends apartheid. Members laud Issue 44, first *South American Explorer* in color.

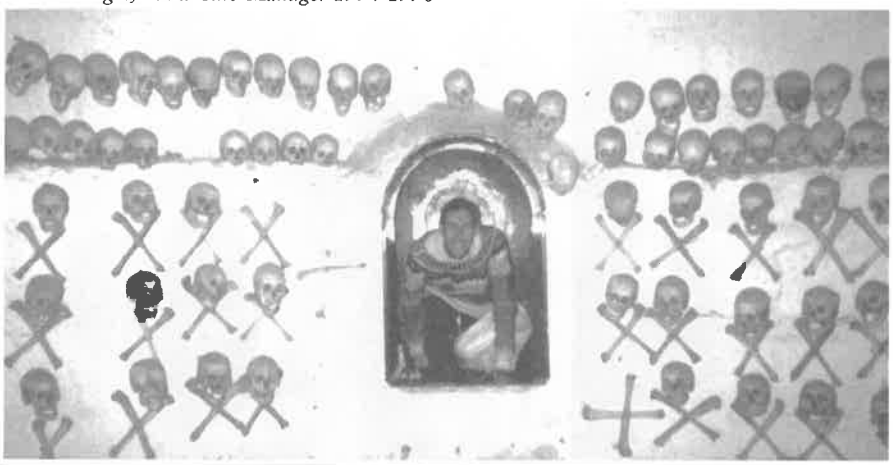
DECEMBER 1996: Presidents of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia sign peace agreement. E-mail in all three Clubs. Communication between Clubs at all time high.

NOVEMBER 1995: U.S. State Department lifts warning on Peru travel. Lima Clubhouse considers move.

Small dog bites Melanie Ebertz.

OCTOBER 1996: Large dog bites Genevieve Rague.

Richard Elgar, Lima Club Manager 1994-1996



Actual photo of South American Explorer *magazine on sale at Barnes and Noble bookstore in New York*

Fernando Villafuerte, a.k.a. Máni Saer Viktorsson, a.k.a. Coco in alluring pose.

APRIL 1997: Hale-Bopp outshines Haley. Heaven's Gate group leaves earth on goodwill mission. Should Club members follow? Club says, "No comet."

NOVEMBER 1997: World congratulates Club on 20th Anniversary.

JANUARY 1997: Smallish black dog bites Don Montague.

(left to right) Nelson Carrasco and Diego Proaño, revered friends of the Club

SAEC in cyberspace
http://www.samexplo.org

Flash! Flash! Flash!

"Microsoft stalks Apple; Mac users tremble." "CompuServe buy-out by AOL under review." "South American Explorers Club spurns Bill Gates's offer." These and other breaking stories are shaking up the cyberworld this month. Watch this page for further bulletins.

New! New! New!

Check out the Club's new search engine. Call up our web page, type in a key word and search the entire website.

Always on the lookout for sites of interest to members, our latest search has come up with:

ECO SOURCE

http://www.podi.com/ecosource/
Here's yet another information-packed guide to ecotourism, with lists of what's hot, what's not, destinations, tours and operators, lodges and resorts, activities, publications, how to's and how not to's, definitions, and more.

THE TRAVELER'S CLUB

http://tayara.com/club/
Sometime after 1814, Lord Castlereagh established a travelers' club in London "for gentlemen travelers of distinction." This website carries on that tradition—a page for literate travelers to exchange information, to plan and prepare trips, post their travel essays, and enjoy the eloquence of previous voyagers: "As the Spanish proverb says, 'He who would bring home the wealth of the Indies, must carry the wealth of the Indies with him.' So it is in traveling; a man must carry knowledge with him, if he would bring home knowledge." —Samuel Johnson

NATURAL RESOURCES RESEARCH INFORMATION PAGES
http://sfbox.vt.edu:10021/Y/yfleung/recres.html
Hey. Want to bone up on "The Socio-Psychological Aspects of Outdoor Recreation"? No? Then maybe spend the day delving into "Recreational Issues on Public Lands." These and many more are some of the subjects you'll find on this weighty site.

EASTER ISLAND HOME PAGE

http://www.netaxs.com/~trance/rapanui.html
The most informative site we've seen on Easter Island, also known as "Rapa Nui" or "Isla de Pascua". Lots of terrific links. Click here for history, background, flight information, package tours, etc.

CHIP NEWS (CHILE INFORMATION PROJECT)

http://www.chip.cl/news/index.html
Chile's English-language WWW information site. A summary of the nation's top stories along with important business and mining news posted by 10 a.m. each morning, Chile time. Need updates on Chilean divorce law? You've got 'em. Increases in Chilean dairy production? That, too. These and other news and business stories are all here.

TRANSLATING DICTIONARIES

http://dictionaries.travlang.com/
Need to say "Get me outside. I'm going to be sick" in Dutch, German, French, Latin, Spanish (of course), or Esperanto? No problem. Just plug in your computer, call up this website, and type in the appropriate words. When you get back, type in "Thank you. I feel much better now. I like your country."

CYBERCAFES IN THE AMERICAS http://www2.planeta.com/mader/ecotravel/coffeeag/cybercafe.html
Why bother visiting Machu Picchu, the Galápagos, or Iguazu when you can sit in some upscale cybercafe, sipping cappuccino, while e-mailing your friends back home about the good time you're having? The best listing of cybercafes throughout South/Central America we know of at the moment.

FISH DIVERSITY OF THE PRINCIPAL CHANNELS OF THE AMAZON RIVER, BRAZIL

http://eebweb.arizona.edu/fish/calhamaz.html
Don't carp about the dearth of information on fish diversity in the principal channels of the Amazon. Just call up this colorful sight to learn about taxonomic compositions and distributional patterns of the scarcely-known fish inhabiting the deep, principal channels of the Brazilian Amazon.

CONFERENCE OF LATIN AMERICANIST GEOGRAPHERS
http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/geo/clag/clag.htm
Want to attend the next Latin Americanist Geographers conference? Here you'll find all you need to know about national and international conferences, information on membership, the organization's newsletter and yearbook, as well as an electronic listserv.

LATIN AMERICAN RESOURCES FOR KIDS (K–12)
http://www.lanic.utexas.edu/la/region/k-12/
Listen up, kiddos. This is a really great site for all you grade schoolers who call us up looking for information for your school projects. You don't think so? How about these topics for starters: the art of Mexican native children, Latin American world forum for children, country by country information resources (history, economy, maps, flags, laws, constitution, political parties, etc.), and Latin World (detailed information on 21 Latin American countries). All this and more, right here! Tell your teacher. ♣

http://www.samexplo.org

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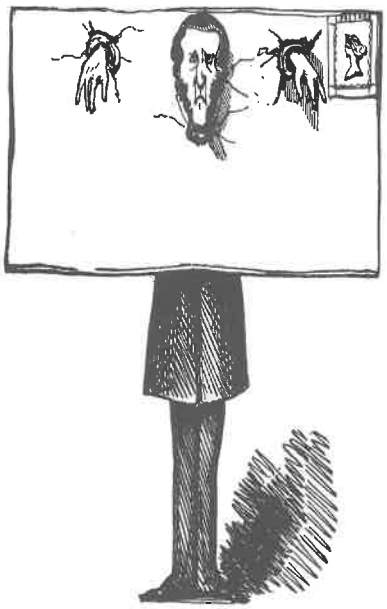

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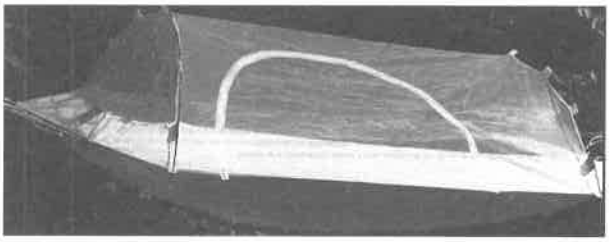

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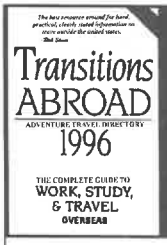

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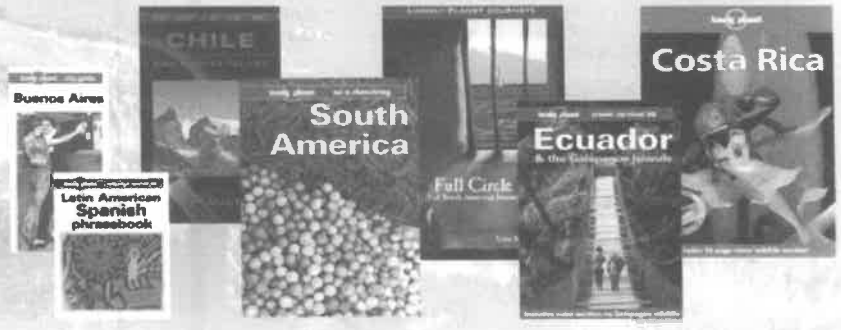

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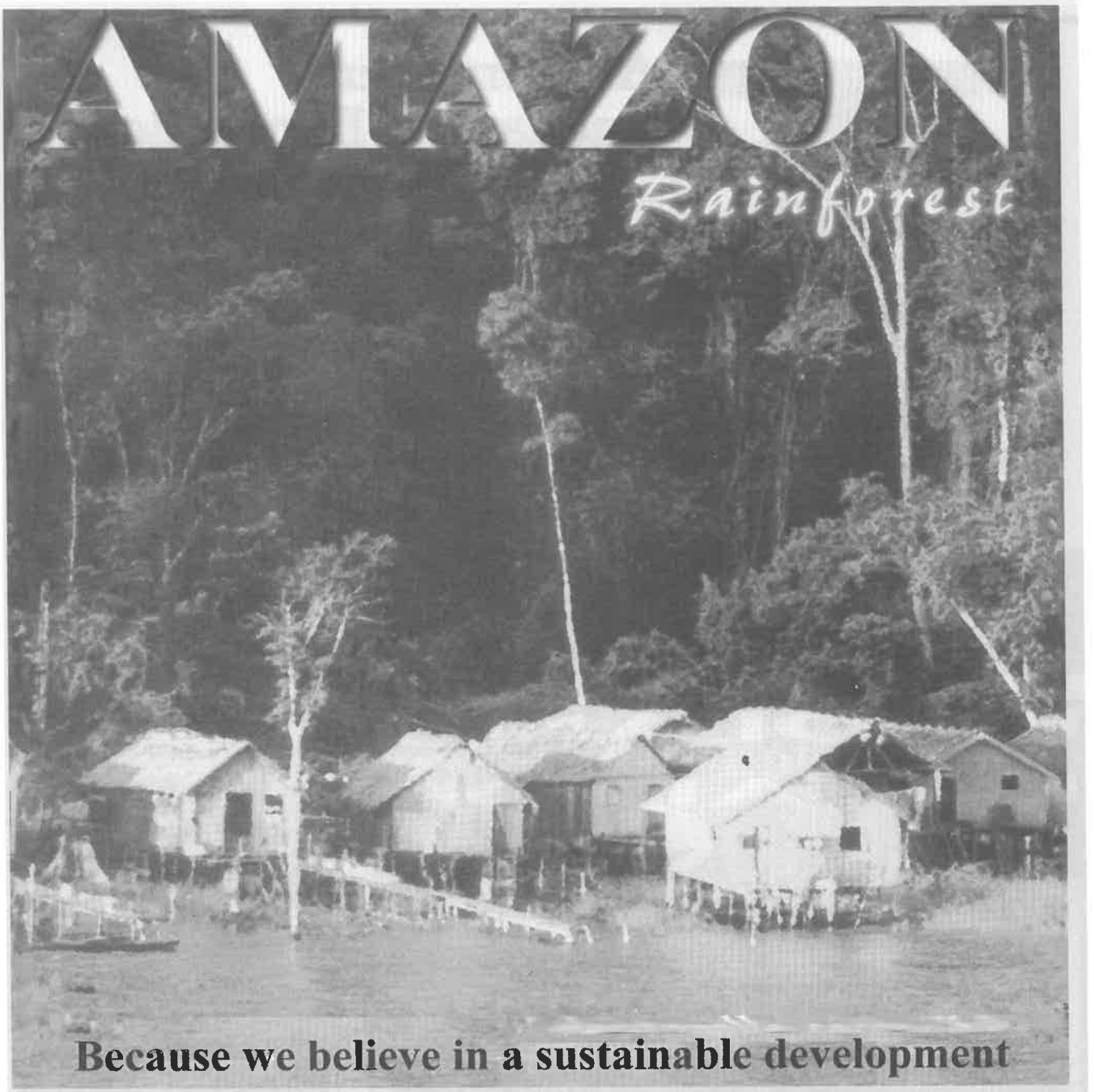

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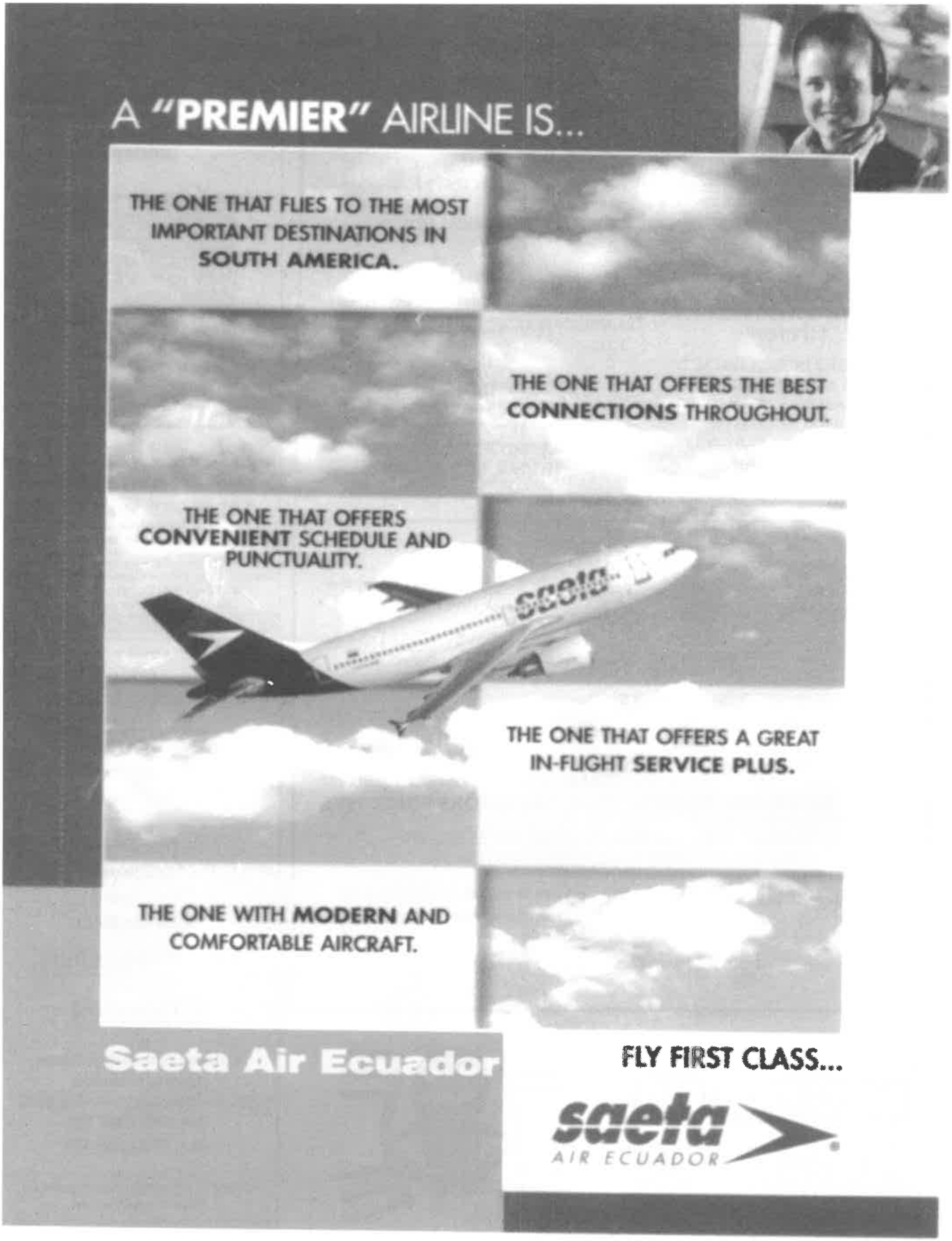
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small specimens of silver work and a piece of the old wooden machine used by the Spaniards in the Mint at Potosi. This machinery was run by mule power. I suppose we are to witness another feast like this picture soon. These fiestas are demoralizing to the indians and ought to be discouraged by the priests, but on the contrary they encourage them. With best of Washington's Birthday greetings from Your Husband.

Some notes are downright inscrutable

H.C. was still in Bolivia two months later. On a postcard of the outskirts of La Paz, his thoughts turned exclusively to home and family:

> Dearest Lizzie, Love and all good wishes from the Southern Hemisphere. May the winter here be an expression of longing for you and home. H.C.R.

By the end of the year, as Mr. Robinson was wrapping up his affairs, a card to Lizzie of a *campesina* leading seven llamas down a river bed carried a little joke: "In just a month I will be ready to start for home, but not on the back of a llama."

Some notes are downright inscrutable. For example, what was H.L. trying to tell the Rev. H.K. Carrol when he wrote on the bottom of a *cholita* portrait from Talma, near Tupiza: "She is modest, the blouse is too modern. Otherwise she is a fine type. Possibly speaks Spanish"?

By contrast, locals tended to use postcards to deliver a message unrelated to the card's image. Here is the plaintive note Corina sent in May 1905 to Lola Branson in Buenos Aires:

> *Querida Lolita. Hace mucho tiempo que nada sé de ti, porque no me escribes, dale a Sofia un abrazo de mi parte y que siento tanto su enfermedad, saludos a todos en casa y un abrazo para ti de Corina.*

A postcard of weekend strollers along *Avenida Arce* bore the foreboding inscription to Mrs. H. Lester Tobey in Melrose, Massachusetts: "I leave for the interior on Friday, so do not be alarmed if you do not hear from me for some time. La Paz is beautiful. John." Mrs. Tobey probably sat by the mailbox until John's next card arrived.

A bi-lingual insult to an utterly charming town

Who knows what incited E. Taylor to pen on the back of a Tupiza card a bi-lingual insult to an utterly charming town:

> 'Distance lends enchantment to the view.'
> *Se puede muy bien aplicar á esta vista, pues una ranchería mas fea es dificil imaginarse."*

Even as we pay homage to the postcard masters of the past, Bolivia is enjoying a postcard renaissance. The photographic artistry of a new generation—Guido Arce Mantilla, Sergio A. Ballivián, Eric Bauer, Carmelo Corzón, Peter McFarren, Victor Hugo Ordóñez, Juan Carlos Rocha, Jorge Ruiz, Oscar Ruiz, Victor Siladi, Carlos Terrazas Orellana, and Omar Trujillo—is featured on the brightly colored postcards sold in the kiosks and by the street vendors along *El Prado*. For the tourists of today and the deltiologists of tomorrow, this is the best greeting of all. ♣

Chasing The Rainbow

A Venezuelan Vignette

Dominic Hamilton

The house—a construction fit for a gnome, typical of the village of El Paují. Faded and stained photographs lie in front of us on the floor.

"It sounds crazy, but this guy really wanted to kill me," recalls Nelson, his eyes glazed with memories. "We were so captivated by the Sabana, though, it didn't seem too odd to use the plane for a while. I never thought we'd end up staying there for as long as we did."

They discovered the wreck on the edge of a forest—an old DC-3.

Dominic Hamilton is a freelance writer who divides his time between London and Venezuela. He is working on a trekking guide to the Gran Sabana scheduled for publication next year.

Nelson tells his story with a broad, cheeky grin on his weathered, handsome face, shaded by the straw hat which rarely leaves his head. He'd fallen in love with Elisabeth, a married woman. When her husband threatened retribution, they fled south to the savannah. On their wanderings they discovered the wreck on the edge of a forest—an old DC-3. Young lovers being young lovers, they made it their home, converting the fuselage. It grew into a meeting place for their artist friends. Over time, news of the "Aeroplane Workshop" and the artists who gathered there spread. Itinerant exhibitions of their works were held around the country, drawing attention to the region and the need to preserve it.

Nelson passes me other photos, all that's left of the *avion*. After he abandoned the fuselage and moved to El Paují, someone with a blow-torch cut it up for scrap.

"The leaky roof and low ceiling were a pain in the neck anyway," he admits, grinning. He still does all his cooking outdoors though. Old habits, like DC-3's, die hard in the Sabana.

basic but ingenious houses and a remarkable community alongside the Pemon Indians.

Stories like Nelson's are not uncommon in El Paují, nestled at the southern edge of the Gran Sabana in Venezuela's lost and forgotten southeast. Here are the urban professionals who have given it all up, people in their twenties who have turned their backs on the bump and grind of Latin American city life to build basic but ingenious houses and a remarkable community alongside the Pemon Indians.

The story of how I came to know and fall in love with this colorful community is shrouded in words like "destiny" and "fate" or, for the more rational (cynical?), attributable to too many readings of *The Celestine Prophecy*. Not to start with, though. The description of the village in my *Lonely Planet* guidebook said something along the lines of "a good place to stay for a few days, friendly locals, lots of walks to waterfalls and beauty spots." Nothing fateful about that.

But the thing is, I came to Venezuela to search for my French girlfriend. I had lost contact with her and, having grown bored of Caracas and worried about my finances, decided to abandon my Quixotic quest to find her and enjoy what was left of my holiday—alone.

A week later I found myself in El Paují, with a head full of the sights of the Sabana. A torrential rain storm dogged and depressed me most of the day, the parrot in the local café my only company ("Who's a pretty boy then...").

a girl I swear is my girlfriend emerges from the cloud

One afternoon I'm lounging near the road, waiting for the sun to set so I can take yet another photo. I've spent the last four days exploring the hills and enjoying the waterfalls and rivers. A jeep makes its way laboriously up the dirt road toward me. I peer into the distance. The car looks vaguely familiar. Isn't the squat figure with bushy white hair behind the wheel someone I know? As the vehicle comes within 50 yards or so, I see agitated movement in the back seat. It lurches to a stop. Dust billows up from all sides. A girl I swear is my girlfriend emerges from the cloud, and in slow motion and Vaseline-vision, runs towards me. Somewhere hidden in the bushes, an accompanying string quartet swells into a symphony.

the Gran Sabana is literally littered with gold and diamonds

She says she mentioned the village at some point. I say she never did. But no matter. The impressive plains are magically transformed into haunting patchworks with hues of the richest green, waterfalls metamorphose from natural wonders into gushing torrents brimming with messages only the love-struck can decipher, and dense forests suddenly turn into auditoria where each bird sings an aria for my delight alone, where every new plant or flower unfolds solely for my benefit and wonder.

Well, that's it. I'm suckered. Or maybe Sabana-ed.

My quest has not been in vain—my dream has come true. Every night I drift off to sleep under a blanket of twinkling stars, wafted o'er by the warm currents of my happiness and relief. But then the Gran Sabana is a land of myths and dreams: Walter Raleigh's mad goose chase across the "large, rich and beautiful empire of Guiana," Conan Doyle's fantastical *Lost World*, those mysterious men without heads and the too-tall tales of Lake Manoa and El Dorado.

The Renaissance dreams of intoxicating wealth, not unlike my lusty Francophile longings, have also been fulfilled—only a few centuries too late to comfort the souls of the hundreds of men who lost their lives to disease, deprivation, and Indian arrows. The Gran Sabana is literally littered with gold and diamonds, as if there had been a hole in God's pocket as he wandered across this earthly paradise sowing his divine seeds. At first, I thought the *sabaneros* habit of walking around with head stooped, eyes scouring the earth was a sign of depression. In fact, they're just checking to see if the rains have unearthed a month's wages.

usually just enough for dinner and a few beers

The area west of El Paují is now one of the feverish hearts of the new gold rush which swept over the Amazon and the Orinoco basins in the last decade. Day by day, the veins of greed and destruction burrow their way deeper into the last of the rainforest. With so much money to be made, there's little hope of saving this fragile and invaluable ecosystem. It would take radical action by the government—that, or a huge world-wide drop in the price of gold.

Although he would rather tend his vegetable patch and rosehip orchard, Paulista has lived by mining most of his life. He spends days down by his river, bent double, digging, panning, and hoping. Once in a while we go together, spinning his weather-beaten wooden pan to the lilt of Brazilian ballads until that fateful moment when the last sand is pushed away and the shiny gold dust lights up our faces—usually just enough for dinner and a few beers.

Paulista struggles to buy the house he's lived in for the last four years. It was abandoned when he moved in, but the people who built it now want to sell. Alas, there are no land titles and even if there were, Paulista doesn't have two coins to rub together. El Paují is the frontier in every sense of the world—no taxes, no police, no law.

the epicentre of the middle of nowhere

Over the last decade the villagers have built a school. Parents teach what they know to *criollio* and Pemon children alike. There is also a dance hall which has grown into a center for the community's cultural activities and a *casa de la cultura* which buys and displays local arts and crafts. Most years they hold a Creator's Encounter. Here, musicians, artists, dancers, and bohemians converge to exchange ideas and launch projects. All this in what is, frankly, the epicentre of the middle of nowhere.

I've been back three times now, irresistibly drawn by some centripetal force to the place where I'm happiest. My French love has since faded like the ink of our letters, though my love for the Sabana, its people and all things bright and beautiful hasn't dimmed a watt. Many of my dreams are yet to be fulfilled, but I live in hope, for if they're going to come true anywhere, it'll be here in the Gran Sabana.

You can spot me a mile off. Mid-twenties, ragged sun hat, dishevèled clothing, shuffling along, eyes glued to the road. It won't be the Gran Sabana gold I'm chasing. It's the rainbow. ♣

Ruta Cuarenta

Federico B. Kirbus

Buenos Aires: CapuzVarela, 1996. 125 pages, paperback.

Patagonia

Federico B. Kirbus

Buenos Aires: CapuzVarela, 1996. 88 pages, paperback.

Argentina

Country of Wonders/ País de Maravillas

Federico B. Kirbus

Buenos Aires: CapuzVarela, 1996, 2nd edition. 157 pages, hardcover.

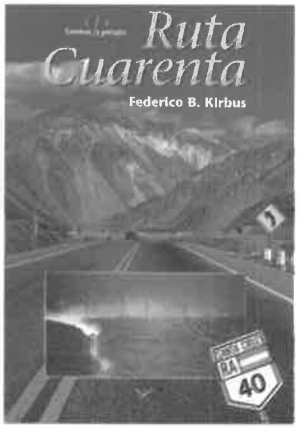
Argentine travel scribe (and *SAE* contributing editor) Federico B. Kirbus has been exploring his country's highways and *caminos* since 1954, turning out books and articles with impressive regularity.

Ruta Cuarenta traces the history and the path of Argentina's longest highway, Ruta 40, which rises at La Quiaca, on the Bolivian border, and uncoils 4,767 dusty, gravelly kilometers (a few sections are paved) before coming to a full stop at Punta Royal near the Strait of Magellan.

In the north, Ruta 40 pilgrims traverse some of the highest and driest terrain in all of Argentina. They pass Las Salinas Grandes, the immense salt flats along the Jujuy-Salta line, and, further south, the lunar Valle Sagrado de los Indios. Approaching Mendoza, the terrain takes a verdant turn and Ruta 40 becomes *el camino de vino*. Further south, it wends along the Andean foothills, past the national parks of Lanín, Nahuel Huapi, Lago Puelo, Los Alerces, and Perito Moreno.

Kirbus, assisted by photographer Jorge Schulte, dispatches all of southern Argentina in the brief (88 pages) but fact-jammed *Patagonia*. He covers every imaginable topic from the weather (windy) to the dinosaurs (extinct).

How are the glaciers formed? Kirbus supplies an illustration.. How much rain and snow does Lago Argentino receive? Kirbus has a chart. What will be the low point of your visit? Some 66 kilometers outside of Puerto San Julián, Santa Cruz, is Laguna del Carbón, the lowest spot in the Americas. At 105 m below sea level, the laguna is 19 m lower than Death Valley.



Argentina: Country of Wonders/País de Maravillas is an illustrated encyclopedia of Argentina, from the far north to the far south, from the precambrian age to the 20th century. The ages often meet. In Santiago del Estero, *chatas*—high-wheeled, mule-drawn carts—are still used to haul lumber, charcoal, and grain to market. In Buenos Aires, twenty-something *porteños* slink to one- hundred-year old tangos. And tourists delivered by jets from all over the globe crowd Los Glaciares National Park to view ice packs formed thousands of years ago.

These volumes burnish Kirbus's reputation as the dean of the Argentine road writers.

—Daniel Buck

I Came Not Alone

Jim Tarbell

Caspar, California: Ridge Times Pres, 1994. 141 pages, paperback.

Whether it's ancient stories like the Biblical recounting of the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden or more contemporary lore like the disappearance of an American golden age free of crime, immigrants, or single mothers (the myth in last year's elections), literature and politics throughout human history have been replete with stories of paradise lost.

One of the latest and most engaging examples of this recurring theme to come from California is this slim but attractive volume by Jim Tarbell, widely known to readers of the quarterly journal *Ridge Review* for his perceptive observations on local politics and economics. *I Came Not Alone* displays a side of Tarbell that few of his fans know about: Tarbell, the raconteur. And an excellent one he is!

In 150 pages, Tarbell offers approximately twenty vignettes. These are drawn from two and a half years of Peace Corps adventures during the mid-1970s in the

cities and villages of Ecuador, Chile and Argentina. Even in his twenties, Tarbell had a sharp eye for the gap between talk and action on the part of politicians and U. S. government and the destructive features of so-called "economic development" and "political stabilization" as practiced after World War II.

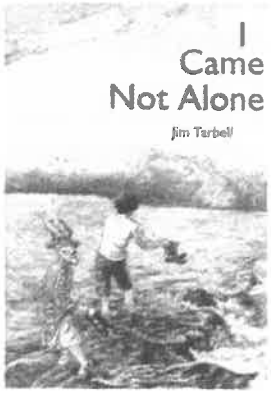
Although Tarbell is a persuasive writer on these matters, he reserves most of *I Came Not Alone* to illustrating bad policies, rather than denouncing the policies themselves. Much of the book is devoted to showing how otherwise healthy communities, both rural and urban, have been undermined by global politics and economics. Small farmers, herders, and ranchers are forced to produce for the world market, and families are torn apart by civil strife and industrial dislocation. Tarbell lived with these people and reports first-hand the details of the damage.

He is also familiar with how North Americans conduct themselves in South America and knowingly describes how they create little niches of back-home culture: "I knew of the oilmen, because I had been to their haunt, a secretive little bar just over the hill . . . The windows were covered and once past color-paned doors, the visitor entered the land of the North . . . It reminded me of a barn just outside El Paso: cow horns and country music completed the scene. . . It was here that the riggers, fitters and dredgers escaped from the 'gookland' outside its walls . . . Gooks was the term they used for the spinners of wool and marketers of survival who carried on their lives in the Andean mountains. Like the draftees who popularized that term during another American invasion to the east, few of these conscriptees or their families were here by choice, but rather for duty and pay."

Footnoted with historical references that give context to his tales and illustrated and supplemented by compelling drawings by John Fadeff and maps by Fadeff and Rebecca Lafore, *I Came Not Alone* is entertaining, educational, and enlightening. A good excuse to spend a day by the fire this winter.

—Ken Larsen

To purchase I Came Not Alone, *contact Ridge Times Press, Caspar, CA 95420.*



Guía de Turismo en Estancias

Francisco N. Juárez

Buenos Aires: Guías Planeta, 1997.
168 pages, paperback.

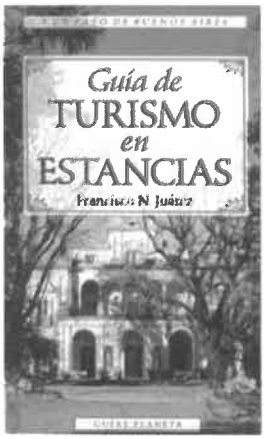
In recent years, Argentine estancias have begun to open their *tranqueras* to tourists, an extension, albeit commercialized, of the pampean tradition of offering hospitality to passing wayfarers. Veteran *La Nación* travel writer Francisco N. Juárez has pulled together a dandy guide to fifty estancias within a day's ride (by car, bus, train, or ferry) of Buenos Aires that have hung out the *bienvenidos* sign. Forty are scattered on the far-flung plains of the province of Buenos Aires, and the remainder are in Entre Ríos or along the Uruguayan coast across the Río de la Plata estuary.

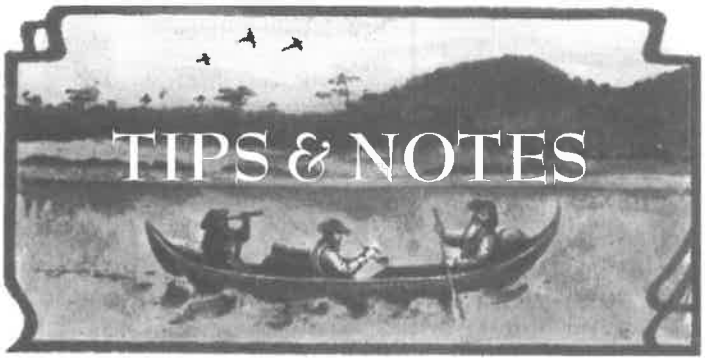
The lodgings are not cheap. Most run $100 to $150 a night per person, double occupancy, but customarily include four meals (three squares, plus tea) and an open bar. Children get a 50 percent discount and *huahuas* are free. Some establishments feature day visits, with lunch and tea, at a third the price of an overnight stay. Cash, not plastic, is the coin of the realm at almost all the estancias.

As befits the world's beef-eating Shangri-la, meals are hearty. Peckish guests can count on asados and parrilladas on Saturdays or Sundays and a savory array of steaks, pastas, fish, poultry, and salads the rest of the week—plus welcoming empanadas on arrival. Some gaucho manors offer country cooking; other boast international fare. Whatever the kitchen turns out, you can work off the calories with horseback riding, volleyball, bird watching, swimming, photo safaris, hot-air ballooning, soccer, hiking, fishing, tennis, bowling, and even polo.

The fifty estancias under Juárez's gaze are as ancient as 1769 and as modern as 1981. La Bamba and La Macarena have nineteenth-century names that strike contemporary chords. The older estancias treasure their personal corners of Argentine history. La Bamba, founded in 1832, has President Roca's chimney (What happened to the rest of his house?) and President Rivadavia's chest-of-drawers. Ricardo Güiraldes finished *Don Segundo Sombra* in an upstairs room at La Porteña, and Carlos Gardel once crooned in an arbor on its grounds. A cabin that supposedly sheltered gaucho rebel Juan Moreira is conserved at Los Ombúes. Scenes from the 1996 movie *Evita* were filmed near Santa Rita, an 1810 estancia outside of Lobos.

—Daniel Buck





AMAZON: AT THE IMAX NEAR YOU

AMAZON, the latest IMAX film, has been released, a 40-minute production filmed entirely in the Amazon Basin. *AMAZON* is a mesmerizing travelogue about two "medicine men" from different worlds. Tribal Shaman Mamani and American ethnobotanist Dr. Mark Plotkin join in a quest for medicinal plants—Western medical science meets the myth and magic of Indian shamanism.

This film owes much to two members of the *South American Explorers Club*: Loren McIntyre who wrote the script and co-produced the film and Dr. Mark Plotkin who portrayed himself. Assorted non-members no doubt assisted in the production.

NAPO RIVER HEALTH CLINIC

The Funedesin Foundation Mondaña Project helps rural communities in Ecuador build schools, install sewage systems, and develop methods of sustainable agriculture. Thanks to Funedesin's support and the physical labor of both villagers and volunteers, the Mondaña Health Clinic opened in September. For the first time, 5500 isolated indigenous people living along the Napo River will have access to health care.

However, the physical construction of the clinic is just the first step. Douglas McMeekin, Executive Director of Funedesin, writes, "Now more than ever, the people who need this clinic need your help...please support the staffing of medicinal plant healers, doctors, nurses, lab technicians, and canoe ambulance operators...100% of your donation will go to the clinic."

If you would like to make a donation to the Mondaña Health Clinic or find out more about the project, please write Funedesin, 91 Bethway, Bethany, CT, 06524, USA. E-mail: dtm@pi.pro.ec.

REAL ESTATE OF BLISS

Looking for that little hideaway on a coral beach in the Caribbean basin? How about a four bedroom, four bath villa with 100 feet of private dock, guest cottage, and pool for $1,250,000? Something cheaper? A two bedroom, two bath oceanview condo with pool, boat dock, and walk to the beach for $65,000. Better yet, a two bedroom condo in Bahama South on the canal and near the beach in Freeport, Bahamas. These and other purchasable islands, beaches, villas, condos, and farms in the Bahamas, Caribbean, and Latin America are listed in the glossy little *Caribbean Property List Quarterly Magazine* which can be yours for $49 a year. Preview the publication at www.islandpro.com, then call (941) 772-1747 to subscribe.

DO YOU HAVE THESE SYMPTOMS?

You asked me to drop a line about this fever situation that I'd developed after returning from Peru in March when I learned of more info.

Upon my initial visit, the first thing my doctor did was test for all of the major illnesses that cause fever or those perhaps

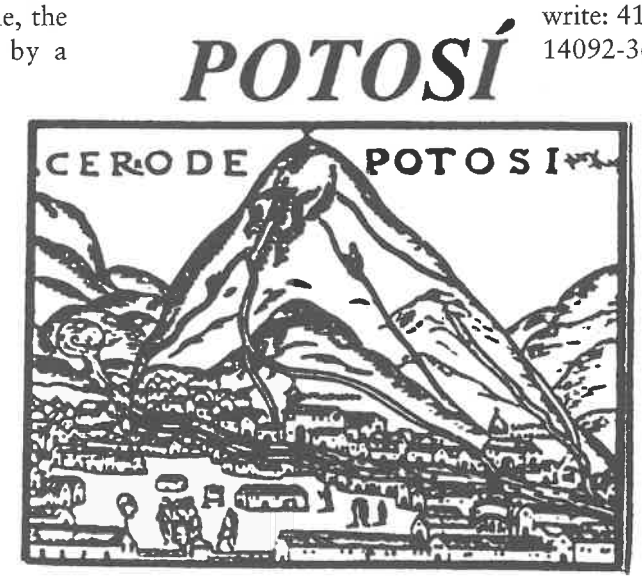
related to my travel—HIV, Hepatitis A, B, and C, Lyme disease, malaria, tuberculosis, lupus, and zoonoses-related parasites. These all returned negative. I had a few flu-type colds between six to ten weeks after my return, unusual body aches that shot down different limbs and fingers, and general back aches. Since June, the aches have been replaced by a woozy-headed, disoriented feeling that resembles heat stroke.

I've received a diagnosis from an infectious disease specialist who believes it to be "Post Viral Fatigue Syndrome." Apparently, this happens most often to people in my age group (I am 23). He explained that since catching and then recovering from a virus I caught in the spring, my body's immune system is still going crazy trying to remedy something that is no longer there. It's refusing to settle back down and basically the "thermostat's norm is running a bit high." The aches and dizziness are a result of my body working overtime. I was instructed to eat a good diet, not do strenuous exercise, and take multivitamins. Hopefully it should set itself back to normal within 3 months (thus making the whole ordeal a 6 month long process).

Well, I've never heard of this type of illness before. It seems possible, but I am going to get a second opinion. My concern is that if this is what I have, the initial virus was an unknown one. It is possible that I'd picked up the virus in Peru. Right now, I don't feel that bad—it's just a nuisance to feel warm all the time and a bit dizzy.

If it would be helpful to share this info, I don't mind. If you hear of any others who have experienced the same symptoms, please let me know. Maybe my info could be of use to others because the symptoms are so nonspecific and vague they could be dismissed altogether.

—Carin Luhrs



COMING UP: "DISEASE OF THE MONTH"

Since the health and welfare of our members is always uppermost in our mind, Dr. Joseph L. Breault, a specialist in tropical medicine and author of "The Intractable Candirú" (Issue #21), will write a "Disease of the Month" column for the *South American Explorer* . This way, members will know the risks and what to do if they contract some dread disease.

Until Breault's debut column in Spring 1998, see the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Website, at http://www.cdc.gov/travel/travel.html, or call their travel hotline, at 404-332-4559. Also, the International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers (IAMAT) offers a free membership to their organization, and will send you a list of English-speaking physicians who have agreed to see IAMAT members on a fixed-fee schedule, charts and lists of recommended vaccinations and immunization requirements, and climatic and sanitary conditions all over the world. To contact IAMAT, write: 417 Center St, Lewiston, NY 14092-3633, or call 716-754-4883. Speak with your doctor or local travel clinic for more information.

CITY OF SILVER

Planning to be in New York City between now and December 14? Interested in luxurious textiles, detailed rugs, elaborate silver work, or 17th to 19th century artwork? Then check out "Potosí: Colonial Art from the Bolivian City of Silver" on exhibit at the Americas Society Art Gallery, 680 Park Avenue.

Potosí's long and complex history includes a silver mining boom in the late 1500's. By 1600, the Bolivian city was the third largest in the world following Paris and Naples. The enormous concentration of people and wealth turned Potosí into a significant center for art. As the silver mines became barren through extensive mining, Potosí deteriorated.

The exhibit will focus on both the artwork produced during Potosí's zenith as well as the gradual toll of the mining industry.

For more information about the exhibit, contact the Americas Society at 212-249-8950.

♣

Lima Club

The Lima clubhouse has been a beehive of activity during the last few months. There's been a seeming blur of faces as explorers arrived in droves for the high season. The hustle and bustle included a change over in staff as well. Katherine Dunphy and Emily Markes have moved on, returning to the U.S. to study and relax, after a few months of excellent work in the Lima office. Their dedication and commitment was invaluable.

The new kids, Rick Vecchio and Timothy Currie arrived in the beginning of July to start their tour of duty. Soon after their arrival Lima was graced with the company of our highly energetic friend and manager of the Quito office, Sheila Corwin. Sheila brought a wealth of guidance and support to aid in the transition.

Shortly after assuming the post, Rick returned home to Ulster Heights, N.Y., for a much needed and deserved rest, after spending 10 months traveling South America and teaching English in Ayacucho. He returned well rested early in September. Tim was entrusted, under the ever-watchful eye of the Lima club's resident Superwoman, Ofelia Lopez, to keep things on track, learn fast, and not break anything. There are conflicting reports as to how he made out.

Undoubtedly the biggest news of the last few months is the fire that, at the time of writing, is threatening the Citadel of Machu Picchu, causing its closure. Huayna Picchu is currently the historical site most imperilled. Hikers were bustled off the Inca Trail, as it, too, was closed to tourists. In a ritual call to usher in the rainy season, local farmers traditionally burn grasslands to revitalize the soil. This year, dry conditions and extreme winds blew things out of control.

The military and local volunteers mobilized to battle the ensuing inferno. But logistics of getting to the fire, coupled with a severe water shortage in the Cusco area, thwarted attempts to quickly bring the blaze under control. Six days after the blaze started, the rains did come, all but snuffing the flames.

Nevertheless, Cusco officials contemplated severe water rationing, proposing that city water be available only three days a week, one hour a day, to cope with what El Comercio termed "the worst water shortage in Cusco's history."

Unpredictable weather has affected the entire spine of the Andes. One of the hardest hit was Abancay, where the town was snowed in for nearly a week in August, closing the overland route to Cusco. Members reported being stuck in buses for two days between Arequipa and Juliaca as Volcan Misti was snow-covered for the first time in decades.

Although the Cordillera Blanca, near Huaraz, offered a stupendous hiking season, climbing conditions were sketchy, at best. Climbers seemed to find better conditions in Bolivia's Cordillera Real.

Demanding that the Lima/Huancayo train be put back on track, Huancavalicans and Huancayans marched 313 km. from Huancayo along the old rail route to the capital and then on to the Plaza de Armas on Sept. 9.

The Departments of Junin and Huancavalica have complained about precipitous losses in tourism dollars since the train's 1991 closure. The protesters cited government inaction and broken promises. The World Bank gave Peru $35 million in 1995 to revitalize the train. The official stance is that the train will be up and running by early next year. Hopefully this will hold true.

The beautiful collection of artesania Ayacuchana which adorns our clubhouse was briefly augmented by a temporary loan of a woodcarved "retablo" box and a prize-winning ceramic "Iglesia" from member Nick Miles.

The retablo, or Saint Mark of Ayacucho Box, is a portable double-doored altar-piece which dates back centuries to the Spanish Viceroyship. The inglesia, an equally distinctive trademark of Ayacucho's cultural and religious history, can be found atop every rooftop in the Village of Quinua, where both artistic works are principally produced.

Nick asked that we hold onto his newly acquired masterpieces while he trekked back into the highlands to put the finishing touches on some programs for British radio.

Unfortunately, we were forced to pull the trophies from our mantel and literally "bag" them until Nick could pick them up.

Former Lima Clubhouse manager Bill Glick was the first to notice the dung-like odor emanating from the freshly painted pieces. Nose crinkled, he merely shook his head as he made a hasty retreat. That night Rick, Tim, and Sheila opened every window hoping to air out the club before members arrived the following morning. Didn't work—ergo, the double-lined plastic bags.

Muchísimas gracias to members Tom Konner, Janet Heisey and Mary Anna Prentice, and club friends Will Elliot and Daniel Curtiss for helping us out with hand-carries.

Also to be thanked is Janet Heisey for all the work and effort she put into the upcoming Chile packet.

SAEC member Nita Bellare is volunteering in a community health project in Huaral, northeast of Lima. Tag Engstrom, aided by fellow SAEC member Cathy Robinson, is studying the life cycles of freshwater turtles near Puerto Maldonaldo for his dissertation. And Andrew Davies has found gainful employment guiding tours across Peru for GAP Adventures. Chris Benway and his brother, Zack, have Cafe Andino in full swing in Huaraz and are reportedly "serving the best coffee in Peru."

In the coming weeks, Tim, Rick and Ofelia will be organizing a dedication of the Clubhouse library with Eric Lyman in memory of former clubhouse manager Chris Cochran. Chris' positive spirit, love of adventure and humane nature stays with us.

Quito Club

August is the Month of the Arts here in the capital city, and this year's celebration boasted 456 different events with over 3000 participating artists. Theater, dance, music, and film flourished in venues throughout Quito, with representation from all over Latin America. The schedule was so full that it was hard to pick and choose. Some highlights included talks by Eduardo Galeano, author of *Las venas abiertas de América latina*, the Argentine film week at la Casa de la Cultura, "Pluma" presented by the renowned Quito theater group Malayerba, a hard rock festival featuring the best in Ecuadorian heavy metal in the Parque Carolina, and a festival of traditional dance in Plaza Santo Domingo. We wish it were August all year round in Quito!

Ecuadorians are bracing themselves for the arrival of El Niño. He (El Niño) was expected on July 26th but didn't quite make his ETA. Public and private sectors are working together in an effort to prepare for the possibly devastating effects. Farmers have been advised to avoid planting certain crops which are particularly vulnerable (e.g. melons), and a publicity campaign about how to react when faced with a dangerous situation has begun on all major television and radio stations. In 1982, severe weather conditions related to El Niño caused flooding all along the coast; this year's event is expected to be of similar magnitude. At the time of writing, the only effects noted have been warmer sea temperatures, resulting in changes in the marine life found in Ecuadorian waters. The fishing industry has been most affected to date.

In Club-related news, the presentations given in the last few months were very well attended, and our heart-felt thanks go out to all the presenters. First up was Fabian Espinosa, who gave an enlightening talk on local efforts to save the Andean condor, of which there are only about fifty left in the wilds of Ecuador. Armed with slides, a video, and a quiet charm, Fabian held the audience entranced as they learned more about a little-known conservation effort.

Back by popular demand in June was David Gayton of Safari Tours, who gave yet another excellent rundown of the hiking and climbing opportunities around Ecuador. The Club could have used a small auditorium to hold all the sweaty hiker-types who craned their necks for views of his terrific slides. The Clubhouse was abuzz for some time after David finished, as newly-inspired explorers huddled and made trip plans.

The discussion of the year was spawned by Norby Lopez's informative and thought-provoking presentation of the issues surrounding ecotourism in the Oriente. Everyone is looking forward to Norby's next contribution coming up in mid-September, which will deal with conservation issues in the Sierra.

Finally, the presentation series ventured out for the first time and held Michael Dorsey's talk on biodiversity and intellectual property at Café Cultura. Mulled wine and a warm fire kept everyone comfortable as Michael spoke of his research into a very complex and topical issue, one which inspired several thoughtful questions from the sizeable crowd. Many thanks to the good folks at Café Cultura for being such willing and welcoming hosts.

Our Club hikes have kept everyone in the outdoors. Groups of members are getting together every weekend or two and heading out for

an adventure. There's been a lot of participation, thanks to David Gayton, Jane Letham, and Ashish Mukharji who have led different groups. Every hike has had its peaks and valleys, and the degree of participant satisfaction seems to depend on the group, weather, and maps that the leader does (or doesn't) use!

There is yet another reason to join this fantastic club. We have started what we like to call "The Incentive Plan" to stir up even more enthusiasm about the SAEC. Submitting trip reports, donating library books, leading a club excursion, referring a new member, or simply becoming a new member gives you a chance to win one of three fabulous prizes handed out weekly at our Quito Clubhouse! (Wow! What a club!)

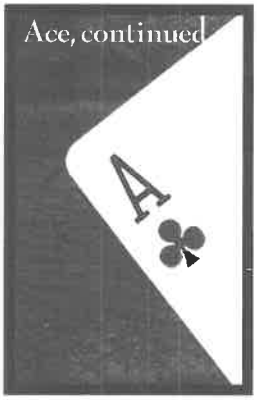
Our semi-annual board and membership meeting will be held in November. Contact us for the details. All members are welcome!

WARNING: New electric door on outside gate of the Quito Clubhouse defies the dexterity and intelligence of most new arrivals at this altitude. We recommend acclimatizing before attempting this entrance!

Well, our new high-tech security system has succeeded in scaring off quite a few prospective members. We have introduced the incentive plan (described above) to counteract the effects, but it remains to be seen whether or not this will help. Our new gate probably won't protect us from El Niño, but it does keep members and their possessions a wee bit safer.

(Club Wish List, Continued)

Remember in Issue 49 under this heading where we asked for a three-line phone system? Pretty gutsy, huh? Bet you didn't think we'd get one. Well, it just so happens that our plea was perused by none other than **John Mulholland**, the owner of such a system who, having upgraded his phone system, put the three-line one in the basement. Since then, he's packed it up and sent it our way. Trouble reaching the Club? Wait 'til we've installed the new AT&T Merlin with eight phones. Thank you, John! ♣



to, not molded by, its environment. Natural selection will rule no more. You, Karen Taggart and you, Jonathan Hirschberger, will bask in an evolutionary nirvana. You will be home. Congratulations.

Is this a fitting time to point out that, what with taking monthly air samples, vial storage, corks, record-keeping, labels, tube racks, etc., Operation MPP is costing the Club a bundle?

No matter. Once the members find out about Operation MPP, we fondly look forward to a surge in membership, especially in the higher categories. After all, even an Afterlife membership is a small price to pay for immortality.

But now, as in the past, we'd like to take a moment to thank those special members who, knowing nothing of Operation MPP, gave that not-so-little extra by becoming Contributing, Supporting, Life, and Afterlife members. Their generosity kept the Club going in times of adversity.

Our gratitude to:

CONTRIBUTING

Glenn Austerfield
Lyn E. Bright
Anthony Cavender
Lyman W. Cole
Robert D. Corelle
Robert & Joyce Daniels
Julia Dekker
James Dow
John Dragisic
R. L. Hamill
David Hunt
Roger E. Kendrick
Kathy Malan
Damon F. Mills
Jana & Matt Morgan
Angela Patterson
Nick Roncone
Danny Sorrells
William Stacey
Patrick L. Swift
David Brian Toland
James D. White
Antony Whittle
Susan Wilder
Robert E. Wolcott
Joseph M. Zimmerman

SUPPORTING

Steven Bernstein
Christopher Kennan
Markien Rongen
Paul Tobler

[1] Lane-O'Neill, Alecia, "Lost & Found Hound." KidCity, September 1997 ♣

Jeanne Devine-Soll warns:

Just because an agency gets you discount prices on international flights doesn't mean they'll always get you good prices on internal flights. You can book internal flights outside of Peru to avoid the 18% sales tax, but be aware that one way Peruvian domestic flights should cost around $60.

Planning to drive through Mexico and Central America? R. D. Warner offers the following tips:

- Buy spare parts and have two spare tires per automobile.
- Have titles for each vehicle or a letter from the loan officer.
- If a second person is driving one of the vehicles (not towed or on a trailer), his/her name must also be on the title.
- Take along a credit card you do not mind canceling to use as a security deposit guaranteeing you will exit the country with all the vehicles.
- Make photo copies of the registrations and your drivers license: Give copies to officials unless they ask for original.
- Go to a travel agency such as AAA and purchase a couple International Drivers Licenses: Give IDL to officials instead of U.S. license. If they want to keep it until you pay a fine, let them keep it as a momento of your travel through their fine country.
- Buy insurance for Mexico immediately at the border. It is not mandatory to buy it there, but you can be jailed if stopped without having insurance.
- If you have a pickup with a topper, have dark tinted plastic installed on the windows so that passersby cannot see your belongings in the back.

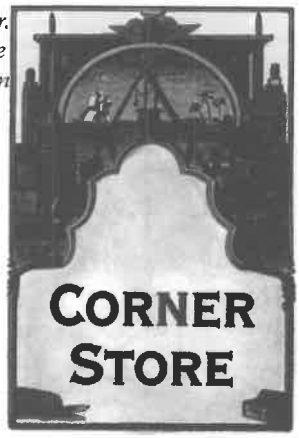
Mary Anna Prentice reports:

Travelers to Peru be forewarned: Cheap tourist "replicas" can be confiscated. I fully concur with the Peruvian antiquities laws and believe Peru has every right to halt the exportation of their ancient artifacts. However, my gifts for family and friends were some nice replicas of Moche ceramics clearly incised with the artist's name and the word "replica." I was surprised when CORPAC security guards informed me it was illegal to take replicas out of Peru. They said it wasn't illegal to buy or sell them—as long as they weren't taken out of Peru. My six ceramic pots were confiscated. There was never a question of whether they were antiquities vs. replicas—they could not be exported in either case.

Do you have any tips you picked up during your travels? Send them to Tips From the Road, South American Explorers Club, 126 Indian Creek Road, Ithaca, NY 14850 or e-mail us at explorer @samexplo.org. See your name in print and bask in other members' thanks and admiration. ♣

The holidays are around the corner. Want to give a unique gift? Choose from below and use our order form on page 63. The South American Explorers Club also sells a host of other excellent guidebooks and maps of South and Central America, cassettes and CDs of Latin American music, and some nifty t-shirts.

To request a free catalog: call (800) 274-0568 9A.M.-5P.M. EST, fax your request to (607) 277-6122, e-mail us at explorer@samexplo.org, or take a look at our catalog on-line at ***http://www.samexplo.org.***



Christmas Bootie

Your friends expecting gifts for Christmas? Give them the bootie. Put a bottle of wine, a jar of Beluga caviar, the deed to a small chateau, a little velvet bag of uncut gems, in one of these adorable little handmade stockings and you will make somebody very happy indeed. (We have a handful of harvest booties left, first come, first served, otherwise only the design shown here.)

$9.00 [Members $10.00] Item #839

Arpillera

Just last year, you would have had to pay twice the price for one of these exquisite handicrafts. Truly a steal, this work of Peruvian art is a small masterpiece. At 18" x 18", this wonderful wall-hanging brightens up a room and gladdens the heart of its owner.

Market scene (limited supply) $25.00 [Members $20.00] Item #842

Harvest scene $25.00 [Members $20.00] Item #840

Brazil—Roots—Samba

We know you are a connoisseur who likes the cool, sophisticated, jazz-inflected sensibilities of Brazil's samba music. This recording is for you. Groove to the variety, richness, and charm of the national sound. Treat yourself to this CD and dance into another dimension.

Cassette $9.99 [Members $8.99] Item #4507

Compact disc $17.50 [Members $16.50] Item #4508

Music for Maids and Taxi Drivers

Brazil: Forro

Here is the unvarnished rock 'n roll of the Brazilian northeast. Played with driving rhythms on sanfonas (button accordions). Gritty, hard, and harmonically straightforward.

Cassette $9.99 [Members $8.99] Item #4505

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Shine Eye Gal

Brukdon! Belizean Calypso

Brukdon is a style of singing and dancing heavily influenced by calypso. On this CD, the music harks back to its British and African roots. This CD presents two extremes—the sweet lilts of the Mini-Musical Female Duet and the complex percussion of boom and chime orchestras.

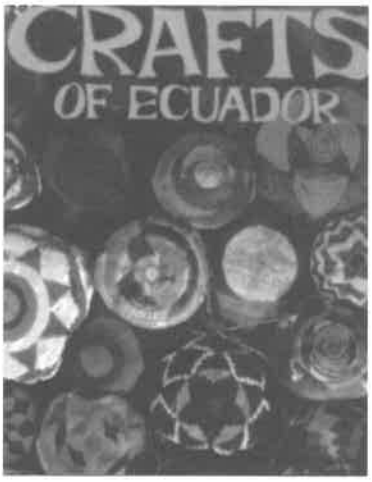
Compact disc only $17.50 [Members $16.50] Item #4509

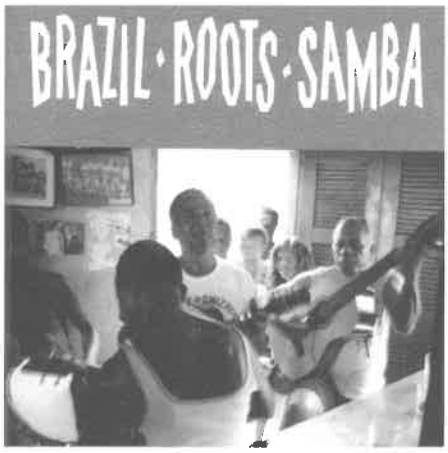
Crafts of Ecuador

Pablo Cuvi

A stunning book—180 pages of color photographs spanning the entire range of Ecuadorian crafts—textiles, weaving, metal work, leather tooling, ceramics, candle making, carvings in wood, stone, tagua and more. A breathtaking tour de force.

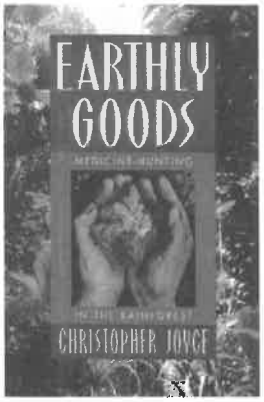
$60.00[Members $55.00] Item #190





Market Arpillera

Harvest Arpillera



Discovering Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands

Introduction by Loren McIntyre

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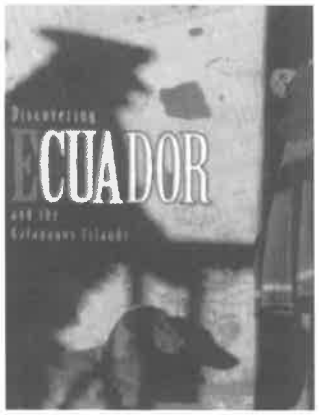

Portraits of the Rainforest

Adrian Forsyth with photographs by Michael and Patricia Fogden

Award-winning Forsyth explores the nature of tropical life with a creative, anecdotal text, great expertise, insight, and style. Highly recommended. 150 full-color photographs. Paperback, large format.

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Edited by Julie Sloan Denslow & Christine Padoch

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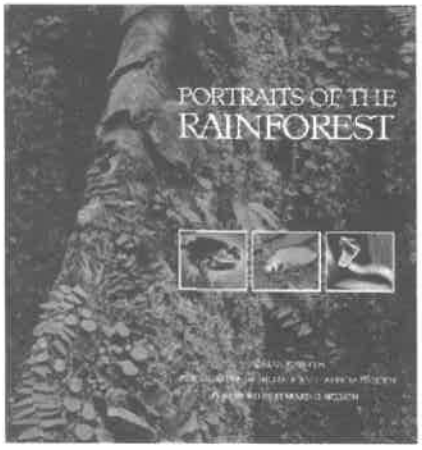

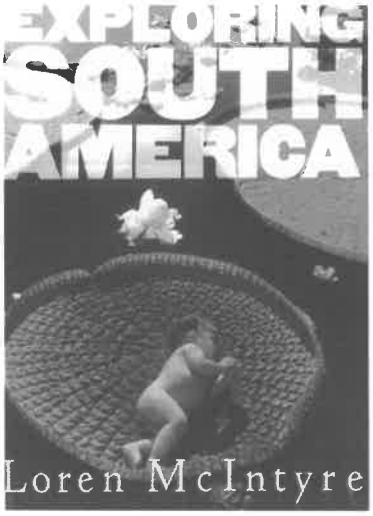

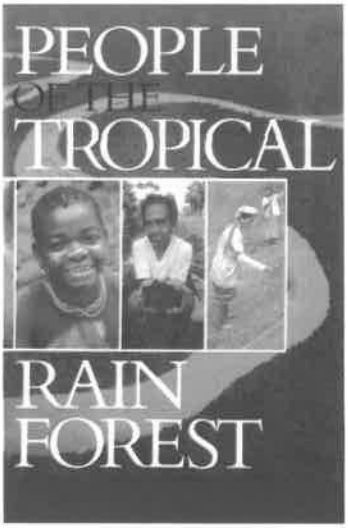

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Buy all four of these Lonely Planet tapes, and we'll throw in a cassette tape of Latin American music. Too generous? Yes, but for you...

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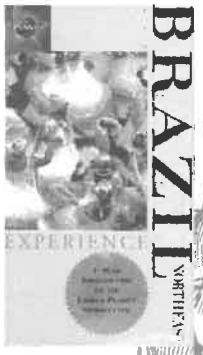

Brazil
$19.95
[Members $18.95]
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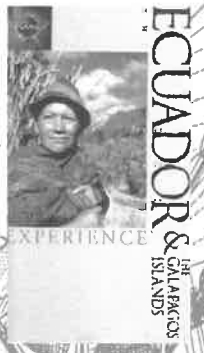

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If a picture is worth a thousand words, how do you describe four 47-minute video tapes? In a word, marvilloso.

SOUTH AMERICAN EXPLORERS CLUB
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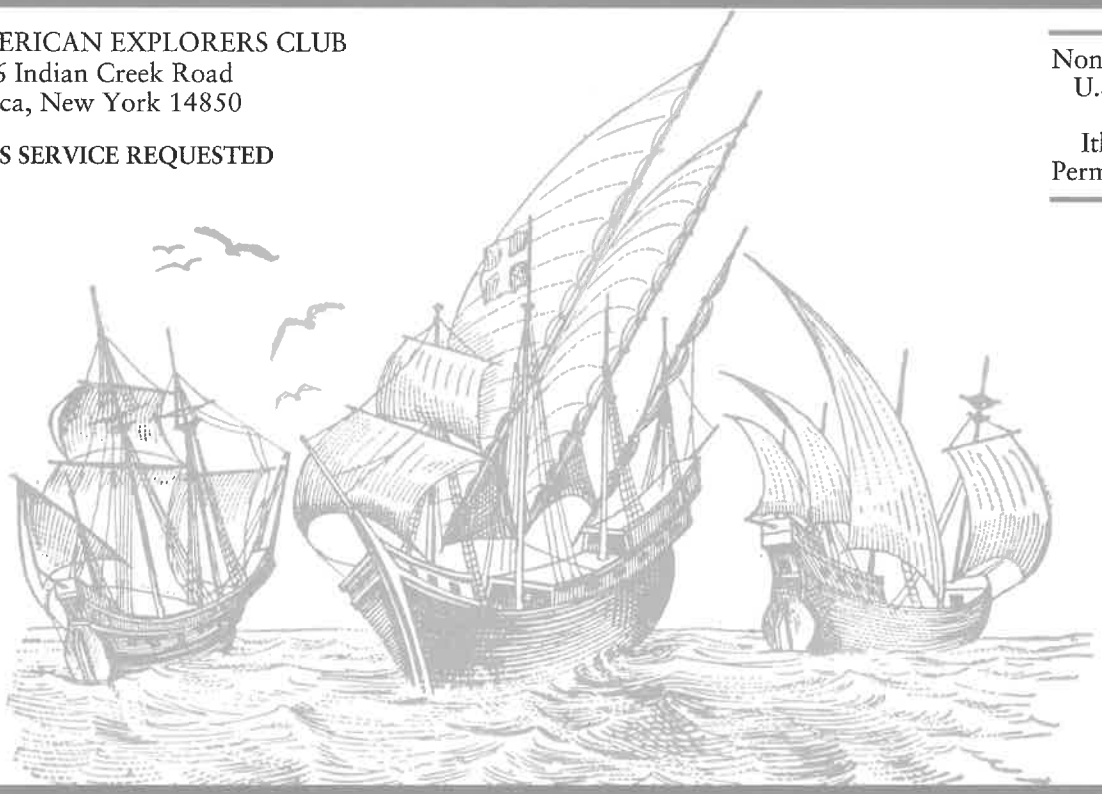
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